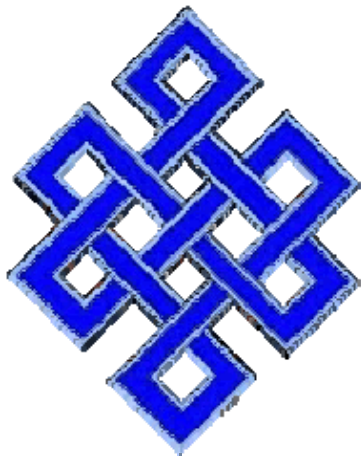


Mi-pam-gya-tsho's  
*Primordial Enlightenment:  
The Nyingma View of  
Luminosity and Emptiness,  
Analysis of Fundamental Mind*  
with oral commentary by  
*Khetsun Sangpo*



Jeffrey Hopkins

UMA INSTITUTE  
FOR TIBETAN STUDIES



# ANALYSIS OF FUNDAMENTAL MIND

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# Preface

This is the first translation of *Analysis of the Meaning of Fundamental Mind, Clear Light, Distinguishing the Basis, Path, and Fruit of the Great Completeness: Illumination of Intelligence*<sup>a</sup> by the great Tibetan scholar-yogi Mi-pam-gya-tsho<sup>b</sup> (1846-1912) of the Nyingma order. This text on the Nyingma view of ultimate reality is the second volume of Mi-pam-gya-tsho's trilogy, called Three Cycles on Fundamental Mind, which explains the Great Completeness, the basal nature in which spiritual development is grounded.

Commenting on the text, Khetsun Sangpo Rinpoche (1920-2009) expands on his ground-breaking presentation of the preliminary Tantric practices in *Tantric Practice in Nyingma*<sup>c</sup> and in the first volume of the trilogy *The Meaning of Fundamental Mind, Clear Light, Expressed in Accordance with the Transmission of Conqueror Knowledge-Bearers: Vajra Matrix*,<sup>d</sup> published as *Fundamental Mind: The Nyingma View of the Great Completeness*.<sup>e</sup> In that book Khetsun Sangpo provides a short biography of Mi-pam-gya-tsho, drawn from his *Biographical Dictionary of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism*,<sup>f</sup> and then gives expansive, practical commentary on Mi-pam-gya-tsho's introduction, explaining the aim of the book—the differentiation of mistaken mind from fundamental mind. The main topic is primordial enlightenment in the basal clear light, self-arisen pristine wisdom. Then, in four chapters Mi-pam-gya-tsho:

- presents intrinsic awareness, or vajra matrix, drawing on myriad explanations in Tantras;
- details how fundamental mind is an uncompounded<sup>g</sup> union of luminosity and emptiness;

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<sup>a</sup> *gnyug sems 'od gsal gyi don la dpyad pa rdzogs pa chen po gzhi lam 'bras bu'i shan 'byed blo gros snang ba.*

<sup>b</sup> *mi pham 'jam dbyangs rnam rgyal rgya mtsho.* His names, as listed in TBRC (Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center) Peking 252, are *mi pham rnam rgyal rgya mtsho*, *mi pham rgya mtsho*, *'ju mi pham rnam rgyal rgya mtsho*, and *'jam mgon mi pham rgya mtsho*.

<sup>c</sup> Edited and translated by Jeffrey Hopkins, co-edited by Anne C. Klein (London: Rider/Hutchinson, 1982; Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion Publications, 1983; German edition, Munich: Diederichs Verlag, 1988; Chinese edition, Om Ah Hum, 1998).

<sup>d</sup> *gnyug sems 'od gsal gyi don rgyal ba rig 'dzin brgyud pa'i lung bzhin brjod pa rdo rje'i snying po.*

<sup>e</sup> Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2006.

<sup>f</sup> Dharamsala, India: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1973.

<sup>g</sup> *'dus ma byas, asaṃskṛta.*

- refutes Ja-pa Do-ngag's presentation of fundamental mind as compounded;<sup>a</sup>
- and draws distinctions about the nature and appearance of fundamental mind prior to and after realization.

In the first volume of the trilogy, the emphasis is on introducing fundamental mind in naked experience through a lama's quintessential instructions. Here in the second volume, Mi-pam-gya-tsho illuminates the meaning of the Great Completeness especially in contrast to Ge-lug-pa assertions about the fundamental mind of clear light. His concern is with the unwarranted mixture of incompatible tenets into the Great Completeness, and thus he presents questions and challenges to notions that are contrary to basic Nyingma perspectives. Khetsun Sangpo's identification of the meaning and his frequent expansive commentary bring great clarity to basic Nyingma perspectives and crucial topics of the path.

Khetsun Sangpo Rinpoche is a Nyingma lama trained in Tibet. A lay priest and renowned yogi-scholar, he trained in all four lineages of Tibetan Buddhism. He was among the most senior lamas and Great Completeness masters in the Nyingma Tibetan Buddhist tradition and was an eminent Nyingma yogi, teacher, and historian.

He was born in 1920 in Yak-de (*g.yag sde*) on the border between the central and western provinces of Tibet and came to India in 1959. He was soon asked by His Holiness the Dalai Lama to represent Dudjom Rinpoche, head of the Nyingma school, in Japan, where he spent ten years in this capacity from 1960-1970, teaching in Tokyo and Kyoto universities and becoming fluent in Japanese.

In 1971 he returned to India and founded a school to educate Tibetan monastics in his tradition, called the Nyingmapa Wishfulfilling Center, in Bouda, Nepal. Over more than forty years he accepted numerous invitations to teach in Japanese and U.S. universities and to teach students in retreats in Dordogne, France. He taught at the University of Virginia during the spring semester 1974 and in 1986 returned to lecture on Do-drub-chen's presentation of the two truths and to give a series of lectures and meditations at the Union of the Modern and the Ancient (UMA) in Dyke, Virginia, on Mi-pam-gya-tsho's exposition of fundamental mind, from which the two books from the Trilogy on Fundamental Mind are drawn.

In Tibet, Khetsun Sangpo Rinpoche received teachings on the Heart Essence of the Great Expanse tradition from the famous Lady Master Jetsun Shukseb Rinpoche (d. 1953) of Shukseb Nunnery, Tibet's main insti-

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<sup>a</sup> 'dus byas, *saṃskṛta*.

tution for female practitioners of the Great Completeness. His other teachers include Dudjom Rinpoche, Kangyur Rinpoche, and Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche.

His writings feature an account of his spiritual journey and attainments, titled *Autobiography of Khetsun Sangpo: Memoirs of a Nyingmapa Lama from the Yamdok Area of Tibet*<sup>a</sup> and a thirteen-volume *Biographical Dictionary of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism*, an edited compilation of biographies of the masters of all Tibetan Buddhist traditions. His *Tantric Practice in Nyingma* has been used by thousands of students around the world as a guide to the foundational practices.

I studied with him first in Dharmasala, India, in 1972. At one point he explained that he taught from within placing his mind in the one great sphere of reality and that this accounted for his sometimes presenting differing explanations of the same topic, sometimes to the consternation of certain listeners. For me, his profound perspective affords a continual freshness, each line a new evocation.

Jeffrey Hopkins

President and Founder, UMA Institute for Tibetan Studies

Emeritus Professor of Tibetan Studies, University of Virginia

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<sup>a</sup> Dharmasala, India: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1973.



# Technical Notes

In this work, the transliteration of Tibetan follows the system formulated by Turrell Wylie,<sup>a</sup> except that here no letters are capitalized. At the first occurrence of a number of technical terms, Tibetan equivalents are given, accompanied by the Sanskrit when available. These terms appear together in the Glossary, in English alphabetical order. The eight chapter divisions and titles have been added to the translation to facilitate accessibility.

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<sup>a</sup> See “A Standard System of Tibetan Transcription,” *Harvard Journal of Asian Studies*, 22 (1959): 261-267.



*Analysis of the Meaning of  
Fundamental Mind, Clear Light,  
Distinguishing the Basis, Path, and Fruit  
of the Great Completeness:  
Illumination of Intelligence*

By Mi-pam-gya-tsho

With Oral Commentary

By Khetsun Sangpo

*gnyug sems 'od gsal gyi don la dpyad pa rdzogs pa chen po gzhi lam 'bras  
bu'i shan 'byed blo gros snang ba*

Khetsun Sangpo's oral commentary is embedded in the translation in clearly marked indents.





## *Analysis of the Meaning of Fundamental Mind, Clear Light, Distinguishing the Basis, Path, and Fruit of the Great Completeness: Illumination of Intelligence*

Khetsun Sangpo: “Analysis” here means to ascertain the meaning of fundamental mind, and because there are these three aspects in the Great Completeness—basis Great Completeness, path Great Completeness, and fruit Great Completeness—it is necessary to differentiate between the correct and incorrect basis, path, and fruit. Doing so removes all factors of obscurity about it and increases all good attributes in dependence upon hearing, thinking, and meditating on these distinctions, bringing a light-like illumination to your intelligence; thus the text is called “*Illumination of Intelligence*.”

### 1. Self-Subsistent Pristine Wisdom

*Namo gurumañjushrījñānasattvāya.*

Khetsun Sangpo: In this initial expression of worship in Sanskrit *namo* means obeisance, *guru* means lama, Mañjushrī is Melodious Glory, *jñāna* is wisdom, and *sattva* is being. Thus the meaning is: Obeisance to the guru Mañjushrī, the wisdom being.

With nondual belief in the ultimate Great Completeness,  
Fundamental vajra mind, primordially pure,  
Uncompounded basic element naturally luminous,  
Object of individual self-knowledge pervading all of mundane  
existence and peace,

Khetsun Sangpo: The reason for having an expression of worship at the beginning of a text is, from the author’s viewpoint, for the sake of removing interrupting factors preventing completion of the text and from the viewpoint of listeners, or readers, for the sake of removing interrupting factors to study, opening the way for its completion. Having made an expression of worship, he now makes a promise to compose this text differentiating the Great Completeness in terms of basis, path, and fruit.

I will illuminate here, in accordance with the tantras and quintessential instructions,

The meaning of the supreme secret treasury of the standpoint of  
 self-subsistent pristine wisdom,  
 The excellent, unsurpassed, supreme path, by means of which  
 The Victors and their children, the groups of Knowledge-Bearer  
 Superiors, proceed.

Khetsun Sangpo: This is the path of bliss by way of the practice of the six perfections leading to the supreme happiness of Buddhahood. A Buddha has conquered over all obstructions. In general, Victor's children are of three varieties: the children of a Victor's speech, body, and mind. The children of his speech are the Hearers and Solitary Realizers; the child of his own body refers to his own son, Rahula; the children of his mind are the Bodhisattvas.

The final destination that is the thought of all the various doors of doctrine of Sūtra and Mantra eloquently spoken by the Victor meets back to the fundamental mind of natural clear light, the innate pristine wisdom (*yeshe*), the natural Great Completeness. The primeval original basal clear light, the primordial mode of abiding, is the final noumenon of all phenomena. All appearances of cyclic existence and nirvāṇa dawn from within this.

Khetsun Sangpo: All of the appearances cyclic existence, from the most torturous hell on up through the peak of cyclic existence as well as all appearances of the various types of nirvāṇa shine forth from within this primordial mode of abiding of all phenomena, the original basal clear light.

There is not a single phenomenon outside of continually abiding in it.

Khetsun Sangpo: Whether a phenomenon is of cyclic existence or nirvāṇa, it shines forth from and abides within this basal mode of abiding, not passing beyond it.

This is the place of release, due to which it is the ultimate body of attributes that is the mode of abiding of phenomena.

Khetsun Sangpo: This primordial mode of abiding is the place of release when one understands that all appearances dawn from within that basis; hence, they are called basal appearances (*gzhi snang*). When they are understood as such, then one is released; when one identifies one's own face, when one identifies one's own entity, this is called "release," but in fact you have just become able to encounter the body of attributes that has always existed within yourself. Thus this basal mode of abiding is said to be

the place of release.

And when finally adventitious obstructions [the obstructions to liberation from cyclic existence and the obstructions to omniscience], as well as their predispositions, are purified, it is the final true cessation of the Great Vehicle. “Final place of release” and “Great Vehicle true cessation” are similar in meaning.

In that [basic mode of abiding] there is no duality of mistake and release (*'khrul grol*); it is the great natural equality. It is the ultimate mode of abiding, called:

- [in entity] “pure from the beginning” (*ka dag*)<sup>a</sup> because it is without any [dualistic or conceptual] proliferations
- [in nature] “self-luminous spontaneity” because due to not being a mere emptiness its luminosity is not partial or not limited in extent and not fallen into a particular quarter
- “all-pervasive compassion” because it is the source of all appearances of cyclic existence and nirvāṇa.

Khetsun Sangpo: Because this basally abiding mode of abiding has the three attributes of entity, nature, and compassion, it is ultimate. Here “compassion” refers to all-pervasive compassion suffusing all sentient beings, like Emanation Bodies.

From the viewpoint of being the purity of [all conceptual and dualistic] proliferations, it is the basal element (*dbyings*). From the viewpoint of being self-effulgent luminosity [unimpededly luminous within and unimpededly luminous without], it is self-arisen pristine wisdom. From the viewpoint of the nondualism of the basal element and pristine wisdom, it is the mind of enlightenment.

Khetsun Sangpo: “Basal element” refers to the factor of emptiness; pristine wisdom refers to the factor of spontaneity.

Essentially pure and spontaneous, it is the triply endowed pristine wisdom—in terms of entity, it is empty; in terms of nature, it is luminous; and in terms of compassion, it is all-pervasive. Fundamental mind, ultimate mind of enlightenment, naturally luminous mind, fundamental cognition (*gnyug ma'i yid*), vajra mind, space-vajra pervading space, and so forth, aside from being synonyms of that self-arisen pristine wisdom, do not differ in meaning.

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<sup>a</sup> Literally, pure from the letter *ka*, the first letter of the Tibetan alphabet), that is to say, essentially pure. Using the English alphabet, this would be “pure from letter A.”

When the dawning of cyclic existence and nirvāṇa from within this [basic mode of abiding] is not realized—that is to say, at the time of cyclic existence—the noumenon is not realized, and appearances of apprehended-object and apprehending-subject are perceived variously in a dualistic aspect.

Khetsun Sangpo: When you do not realize that these pure and impure appearances dawn from within this basic mode of abiding as appearances of your own karma but take them to be true, from this mistake you wander in cyclic existence.

At that time these are viewed as unequal in the varieties of self and other, good and bad, cyclic existence and nirvāṇa. When it is realized, then participating in the conventions of nirvāṇa or of purity, due to realizing the noumenon you realize that all phenomena do not pass beyond that noumenon. Although there are appearances in various aspects, you realize their equality, having one taste in the thusness of the sphere of reality [like clouds melted into space] without any of the marks of dualistic phenomena. At that time, everything dawns as primordially released, as not passing beyond the nature of buddha.

Therefore, in terms of realizing this state of natural purity, the noumenon, all appearances are viewed as just naturally buddhafied.

Khetsun Sangpo: “Just” means that there is not anything outside the sphere of the natural buddhification of phenomena.

Because this delineation through viewing all appearances in this way is a noumenal reasoning (*chos nyid kyi rigs pa*), it is unmistakable, and since what are involved with dualistic appearances are mistaken, the proposition that all appearances are primordially buddhafied cannot ever be harmed through the route of mistaken modes of appearance. Therefore, when you realize the Great Completeness—the noumenon of the mind—all phenomena dawn as having a nature of purity.

Khetsun Sangpo: When you go to a land made out of just gold, the only thing that you can find is gold, not dirt. All phenomena shine forth in total purity; there is not the least little bit of impurity.

Sentient beings apprehend their minds in terms of the eight collections of consciousness<sup>a</sup> and do not know the noumenon of their own minds.

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<sup>a</sup> As is quoted in Mi-pam-gya-tsho's *Fundamental Mind*, 67:

When yogis realize the noumenon of mind, pristine wisdom, they do not find even a speck of something called “mind” that is other than all minds being solely within this mode.

Khetsun Sangpo: When yogis realize that all appearances are the projective sport of this noumenon, they know that all of those former minds were mistaken minds—the nonexistent seeming to exist.

All phenomena also similarly dawn as the sport of pure pristine wisdom. Therefore, this [non-finding of any impure phenomena, of finding just the pure,] is the meaning of the statement in the *Secret Essence Tantra*:<sup>a</sup>

A Buddha does not find a phenomenon  
Other than the buddhified.

Khetsun Sangpo: All Nyingma doctrines are included within two classes:

- the Word—the renowned Nyingma tantras and so forth that were brought from India to Tibet by the Indian paṇḍitas and were translated into Tibetan by them
- the Hidden Treasure Texts later revealed from under the ground.

The *Secret Essence Tantra* is included in the Word category.

When the final mode of abiding of undifferentiable basis and fruit is realized, only limitless pure appearances dawn. When pure appearances dawn, even if a Buddha sought and tried to find a mistaken appearance, it could not be found.

In terms of the mode of appearance [as opposed to the mode of abiding], the basis itself has not already ripened into the fruit state.

Khetsun Sangpo: In terms of the mode of appearance, the basis is

The enumeration of the eight collections is as follows: the consciousnesses of the five doors [that is, the five sense consciousnesses], mental consciousness, afflicted mentality, and the basis-of-all, which is the storehouse accumulating the various [seeds]. Those are the phenomena of cyclic existence. How do those proceed in cyclic existence? Due to not identifying the basis-of-all that is the basic reality, through the artifice of intrinsic awareness objects are engaged, whereby the eight collections of consciousness dawn.]

<sup>a</sup> The *Miraculous Secret Essence Tantra*, *sgyu 'phrul gsang ba snying po/ dpal gsang ba'i snying po de kho na nyid rnam par nges pa* (śrīgūhyagarbhatattvaviniścaya), in *bka' 'gyur* (*sde dge par phud*, 838), TBRC W22084.98:110b.1-132a.7 (Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985); THL Ng3.1.1.1.

still in the company of adventitious defilements, and thus although this basal mode of abiding, the basal body of attributes, is primordially buddhafied, there still are obstructions yet to be abandoned during the ordinary state as a sentient being.

And since this which has not yet ripened is not an actual body of attributes [of a Buddha], the present basis [with which we are endowed]—other than just being the cause of a body of attributes—is also not a Buddha with the ten powers<sup>a</sup> in manifest form. Hence, it is thought that this called “the body of attributes of the basal time” is not an actual Buddha.

Khetsun Sangpo: Indeed one would think that because it is just a seed of a Buddha’s body of attributes and is not a Buddha who has the two types of purity—natural purity and purity from adventitious defilements—it is not an actual Buddha endowed with the ten powers, four fearlessnesses, and so forth. However, this description just accords with how it seems in terms of appearance.

Nevertheless, in terms of just the primeval basal time [that is to say, in terms of the primordial mode of abiding itself, not in terms of appearances,] there are no conventions of release and mistake, due to which there are no sentient beings and no Buddha either, since its having been realized or its having been mistaken has not in any way occurred.

Nevertheless, when basal appearances dawn from it, then there are the two paths of release and of mistake from those basal appearances, but release arises from realizing the basis as it is, and mistake arises from not realizing the basis.

Khetsun Sangpo: Identifying the natural face of basal appearances, one is released, whereas not identifying their natural face,

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<sup>a</sup> The ten powers are:

1. the power that is knowledge of sources and non-sources [that is, of causes and effects and so forth]
2. the power that is knowledge of actions and fruitions
3. the power that is knowledge of superior and lower faculties
4. the power that is knowledge of various dispositions
5. the power that is knowledge of various interests
6. the power that is knowledge of paths proceeding everywhere
7. the power that is knowledge of the concentrations, and so forth, and the undefiled states
8. the power that is knowledge remembering former states
9. the power that is knowledge of death, transmigration, rebirth, and so forth
10. the power that is knowledge of the quiescence of all contaminations.

See Hopkins, *Maps of the Profound*, 1004-1005.

one is mistaken; thus there are the two paths of release and of mistake. Release arises from realizing this noumenon just as it is—then one is a Buddha. The state of mistake arises from not realizing this basis, and thereby one wanders in cyclic existence.

Therefore, when basal appearances themselves dawn, from realizing them one has gone to the release of primeval essential purity, at which time one is a Buddha of manifest realization, whereby the ten powers and so forth exist manifestly.

Khetsun Sangpo: From knowing, or identifying, basal appearances as being just this body of attributes that has no need for adjustment, you are buddhified and have manifested the fruit of Buddhahood endowed with all of its requisite attributes.

Hence, although the powers and so forth [of a Buddha] exist in the manner of primordial endowment in the non-abiding nirvāṇa in [the body of attributes of] the basal state, since aside from just a Buddha alone who has complete realization, not even the great Bodhisattvas of the ten grounds can manifestly perceive all those attributes, what need is there to mention ordinary sentient beings!

Therefore, whether all the attributes of this basis appear manifestly or not is not from the side of this basis itself; rather, the differentiation must be made relative to the appearance-perspective (*snang ngo*) of a Buddha, who realizes that basis just as it is, and the appearance-perspective of sentient beings who do not realize that basis just as it is. This original basal noumenon—immutable whether at a time of cyclic existence or at a time of nirvāṇa—is called “fundamental” (*gnyug ma*).

Khetsun Sangpo: The Buddha-matrix pervades the continuums of all sentient beings, like the oil that pervades a sesame seed, being everywhere throughout the seed.

Both release and mistake are adventitious, dawning from its projective prowess.

Khetsun Sangpo: Just as when the wind blows, waves come forth from the ocean, like the sport of the water of the ocean, so, stirred by karmic winds, there are these basal appearances, projective prowess, as the sport of the noumenon. Without such stirring, there are no appearances of cyclic existence and nirvāṇa.

When there is no fluctuation from this basis, there are no appearances as either cyclic existence or nirvāṇa. Hence, Maitreya's *Differentiation of the Middle and the Extremes*<sup>a</sup> says:

Cyclic existence and nirvāṇa,  
These two arise adventitiously.

Thus, in terms of the entity of the primeval basic mode of abiding, which is not differentiated into either cyclic existence or nirvāṇa through adventitious factors, it is not a topic for wondering whether the pristine wisdoms of the ten powers exist manifestly or not and for wondering whether all the marks, beauties, pure land, and so forth of a complete enjoyment body are fully present or not.

Khetsun Sangpo: Both cyclic existence and nirvāṇa, or a state of mistake and a state of release, are factors that have to take place by way of basal appearances from within that basis, and therefore in the primeval basic mode of abiding itself these are not differentiated; they are adventitious. Hence, within the context of the basis—from among basis, path, and fruit—there is no need to think about whether the exalted wisdoms of the ten powers manifestly exist or not in that basis; there is no need to think about whether in that basis the marks and beauties and pure land of a complete enjoyment body exist or not.

At a time of non-fluctuation from the basis, it must be expressed that these abide as the mere great emptiness and luminosity devoid of all limits, and since at that time nothing has arisen as the duality of Buddhas and sentient beings, these pure Buddha attributes are inconceivable [beyond the scope of our minds], since there is no differentiation into such-and-such factors, no matter whether they are undifferentiable. This is because proliferations do not dwell there, like, for example, a learner Superior's meditative equipoise on primordial emptiness and luminosity in which dualistic appearances have vanished.

Khetsun Sangpo: Just as on the first through tenth Bodhisattva grounds the mode of abiding is primordially empty selflessness in the perspective of meditative equipoise in which all dualistic appearances have vanished, so there are no dualistic appearances at the time of the basis.

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<sup>a</sup> Maitreya, *dbus dang mtha' rnam par 'byed pa'i tshig le'ur byas pa (madhyānta-vibhāga)*, in *bstan 'gyur (sde dge, 4021)*, TBRC W23703.123:81-92 (Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985).



And because the ten powers must be differentiated by way of factors in how those pristine wisdoms—subjects—know [various objects], such as sources and non-sources, trainees' dispositions, faculties, thoughts, and so forth.

Khetsun Sangpo: Since the ten powers must be differentiated in this way, they do not exist in manifest form in the noumenon.



## 2. Primordial Buddhafication

*Question:* Well then, are you asserting that [from between the two types of a Buddha's pristine wisdom, the pristine wisdom knowing the mode of being and the pristine wisdom knowing the diversity of phenomena,] the pristine wisdom of the diversity and the vast attributes of a [Buddha's] bodies and so forth are just factors in the sphere of reality that are *suitable* to dawn?

*Answer:* Though such can be asserted from the viewpoint of the factor of the basis *in isolation* (*ldog cha nas*) within the division into the three—basis, path, and fruit, in terms of the mode of appearance there is nothing unsuitable [about the pristine wisdom of the diversity and the vast attributes of a Buddha's bodies and so forth existing right in the basis]. In that way you should understand the meaning of the statements in the tantras of the Great Completeness saying:

Prior to “I” the basis abided this way: Called “the great essentially pure basis,” it abides in the three aspects of entity, nature, and compassion. The entity is the immutable pristine wisdom of unimpeded luminosity, called the mode of abiding of the youthful encased body. The nature is unimpeded illumination of the five lights. The appearance of compassion is like, for example, a cloudless sky.

Khetsun Sangpo: Is this basis of essential purity a mere emptiness? No, it is not; it abides in the manner of being endowed with the three aspects of entity, nature, and compassion. The entity is the body of attributes, the nature is the complete enjoyment body, and compassion is emanation bodies. Thus, it abides primordially endowed with the three Buddha bodies.

The entity (the body of attributes) is the mode of abiding of the immutable pristine wisdom of unimpeded luminosity (a quality of the complete enjoyment body) and of the youthful encased body (the emanation body). It is youthful because the body of attributes is permanent and thus knows no increase or decrease, and it is encased because it is contained within the covering of our ordinary bodies and thus is not manifest. The natural entity of the youthful encased body abides in utter vividness, with no prevention of the illumination of the five lights. The appearance of the compassionate mind, symbolizing emanation bodies, is not just by way of the karma and prayer-wishes of sentient beings; rather, the

emanation bodies that subsist in the body of attributes abide, like a cloudless sky, without the fluctuations of manifestation and of being obscured.

and in the *Tantra of Transcendent Sound*:<sup>a</sup>

In the entity, essentially pure pristine wisdom,  
There is not even a name of cyclic existence such as ignorance;

Khetsun Sangpo: Because the entity is essentially pure pristine wisdom, not even a portion of an adventitious defilement such as ignorance pollutes it.

There are no enumerations such as one and two.  
Not established as existent or nonexistent by analysis,  
Aside from a noumenon not differentiated into anything,  
It is not established even as just pristine wisdom.

Khetsun Sangpo: Because it is beyond the extremes of existence and nonexistence, it is not established as existent or nonexistent through analysis, so aside from being an inconceivable empty noumenon not differentiated into any factors, it cannot be expressed as established even as the pristine wisdom of the final fruit.

Wordless and inexpressible,  
Not dwelling in extremes, it is self-knowledge,  
Extinction of the extremes of expression, apprehension, and name—

Without causes and without enumeration of conditions,  
Without the dualistic appearance of object and subject,  
Not differentiated even into any character,  
Extinction of coarse subjects.

Khetsun Sangpo: Extinction of all coarse levels of awareness.

and so forth.

*Objection:* Thus, since it is not suitable to assert that [Buddha] attributes are spontaneously complete in the basis, it is not reasonable to assert that whatever is pervaded by that basis has the nature of the primordially

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<sup>a</sup> *thal 'gyur/ sgra thal 'gyur rtsa ba'i rgyud/ rin po che 'byung bar byed pa sgra thal 'gyur chen po'i rgyud (ratnakarashabdamaḥāprasāngatantra)*, in *rgyud bcu bdun (a 'dzom par ma)* TBRC W1KG11703.1:3-208 (Nepal: dkar mdzes bod rigs rang skyong khul, dpal yul rdzong: a 'dzom chos sgar, 2000?); THL Ng1.3.3.2.

buddhafied fruit. Rather, the basis is to be asserted as just a buddha of natural purity but is not buddhafied as an entity of the final fruit endowed with the two purities.

Khetsun Sangpo: The objector is thinking that everything is pervaded by the basis, which is equal to space, and although natural purity is contained within the basis, the basis is not endowed with purity from adventitious defilements, which are yet to be abandoned.

*Answer:* In terms of such a primeval basis when it has not undergone fluctuation [from karmic winds], it is not asserted that basal [that is, ordinary] sentient beings and fruitional Buddhas are undifferentiable. At a time when there is no differentiation into the two, Buddhas and sentient beings, no one could even say, “These are the aggregates and constituents of basal sentient beings; these are the paths; and these are the fruits of final purity.” Hence, at a time when, upon the fluctuation of basal appearances from that basis, there are the twofold appearances as sentient beings and as Buddhas, then even the aggregates, constituents, and sense-fields of basal [that is, ordinary] sentient beings are established as pure through the reasoning delineating them as aggregates, constituents, and sense-fields primordially devoid of obstruction in the manner of the emptiness that is natural purity.

Though they appear dualistically as Buddhas and sentient beings, the fact that they even abide within a sameness of cyclic existence and peace is established through the noumenon of great equality. When—from completing familiarization with what has been ascertained in that way—the two obstructions [to liberation and to omniscience] as well as their predispositions have been purified, the factors that obstruct the noumenon are consumed, whereupon a Buddha’s pristine wisdom of meditative equipoise manifestly seeing the noumenon just as it is arises.

Due to the essential that even the diverse substrata do not pass beyond that noumenon, the attributes of the ten powers on the Buddha ground, which is such that the two truths are simultaneously perceived, manifestly exist while one is in meditative equipoise on that [noumenon].

Khetsun Sangpo: Just as in an ocean all of the waves, bubbles, froth, and so on do not pass beyond the ocean, so in this meditative equipoise on the sameness of the mode of abiding all whatsoever phenomena are perceived as not passing beyond the noumenon.

Therefore, in terms of the noumenal mode of abiding the noumenon has primordially not undergone pollution from the two obstructions [to liberation and to omniscience] as well as their predispositions.

Khetsun Sangpo: If we take the mode of abiding of the noumenon as our predominant perspective rather than taking as our predominant perspective phenomena that have this reality (thereby taking phenomena to be the substrata of reality), the noumenon has primordially not undergone pollution.

However, not only is that noumenon not manifest—just as it is—to sentient beings who have not abandoned the two obstructions, but also even if a certain portion of the attributes of the element of attributes is manifest to Learner Superiors [on the ten Bodhisattva grounds] who have abandoned some level of the two obstructions, all of the attributes of the sphere of reality are not manifest as they are to a Buddha, due to which Learner Superiors do not have the pristine wisdoms of the ten powers.

Therefore, in consideration of this fact, it is said in sūtra that the matrix-of-one-gone-to-bliss is an object only of a Buddha, and it is said that although even Bodhisattvas who are lords of the ten grounds [that is, tenth ground Bodhisattvas] have perceived that the sphere of reality merely is primordially endowed with attributes, they are unable to manifestly perceive those qualities.

Thus, these uncontaminated attributes surpassing the number of particles—the ten powers and so forth of a Buddha perceiving the final attributes of the sphere of reality just as they are—are attributes of the noumenon itself, and are not attributes of something else. Hence, it being the case that all phenomena do not pass beyond the state of the naturally pure noumenon, all phenomena abide—by way of their own mode of abiding—in the aspects of inestimable mansions, gods, goddesses, principal deity, retinues, and so forth of a Pure Land of a Complete Enjoyment Body. Therefore, even present impure appearances do not pass beyond being appearances of self-arisen pristine wisdom that is not different from the sphere of reality.

Khetsun Sangpo: All of our impure appearances of the three realms abide without any difference from the sphere of reality that is the basis of their appearance. There is no way that the appearances of cyclic existence could be outside the noumenon of self-arisen pristine wisdom.

Therefore, whether [Buddha] attributes are manifest or not, or whether [things] appear as pure or impure, all phenomena of the basis, path, and fruit are buddhified in the nature of the nature body, the One-Gone-Thus's pristine wisdom endowed with all aspects. Delineation that these bases [that is, phenomena] appearing in the manner of impure cyclic existence

are spontaneously established as entities of the fruit state of the pure great pristine wisdom is a mode of delineation of the standpoint (*dgongs pa*) of primordial buddhafication through the view.

Khetsun Sangpo: At this juncture, the delineation is by way of the philosophical view; it is not that it is manifest this way now.

Through implementing and practicing such by meditating in accordance with how one has distinguished [this basic state of phenomena] through the view, there is progressive enhancement [of experience], whereby the person who is the meditator comes to manifestly actualize the meaning of this delineation of how the basis is primordially buddhafied, and completion right through to the Buddha ground arises. When, through the view, one manifestly actualizes the final meaning of delineating the basis as a great equality of purity, one is said to be buddhafied also in terms of the mode of appearance.

Khetsun Sangpo: Not only in terms of the mode of abiding, but in the mode of appearance, one is buddhafied.

What is primordially buddhafied cannot be made [into being buddhafied] presently by means of the path.

Khetsun Sangpo: Once the attributes of basal buddhafication are in primordial endowment, there is no way that they can be newly achieved through presently cultivating the path.

Rather, upon completing familiarization in accordance with what has been determined by way of the view, [the final meaning of delineating the basis as a great equality of purity] is manifestly actualized, and for this the convention that one has become buddhafied is used.

Khetsun Sangpo: As is said, it is not so much meditation (*sgom pa*) as it is familiarization (*khoms pa*). Through completing familiarization with the view, all those attributes are manifestly actualized, at which point one is called a “Buddha.”

The Original Lord (*gdod ma'i mgon po*), having manifestly actualized such factuality, was released from within the context of basal appearances into the context of the basis without there being any mistake to be abandoned, and hence is called the “Initial Buddha.”

Khetsun Sangpo: Here Mi-pam-gya-tsho is explaining how Samantabhadra was released. The Original Lord, or Samantabhadra Body of Attributes, having manifestly actualized the basal noume-

non—the basal mode of abiding—was released into the stronghold, the secure state, of the effect within the context of basal appearances themselves without actualizing paths that gradually abandon mistake, and thus was released in the context of the basal body of attributes itself. Due to having this mode of release that differs from that of others, the Samantabhadra Body of Attributes is designated with the name the “Initial Buddha” (*thog ma'i sangs rgyas*).

Because the standpoint of the Initial Buddha is such, it must be asserted that [the Initial Buddha] is primordially buddhafied.

*Objection:* Since sentient beings, different from [the Initial Buddha], have already generated mistake, they have mistake that is to be abandoned, due to which they are not Buddhas [that is to say, are not primordially buddhafied].

*Answer:* Since there is no mistake in the basis, even at the time of basal appearances, it is definite that in all aspects mistake is natureless, and [those basal appearances] do not pass beyond the naturally pure noumenon. Therefore, although—in the perspective of sentient beings who have adventitious mistake—the basis and fruit do not dawn as being undifferentiable, [their situation] should not be taken as predominant, since that is a mistaken appearance.

Eye, ear, and nose are not valid.

Tongue, body, and mind also are not valid.

If these sense powers were valid cognitions,

Of what use would a Superior's path be to anyone?

Therefore, within taking the perception by undefiled pristine wisdom distinguishing the mode of abiding as predominant, it has to be established, in accordance with Samantabhadra's perception, that [sentient beings] are primordially buddhafied.

Though they are not Initial Buddhas, even all Buddhas of the three times—buddhafied in the place of release of the basal essentially pure great clear light upon having conquered predispositions for mistake by means of the vajra-like pristine wisdom—perceive that objects of abandonment are primordially nonexistent, and the naturally pure sphere of reality is endowed with all [uncontaminated Buddha attributes. The Buddhas of the three times] do not perceive, in accordance with the outlook of sentient beings, that the [spontaneously established] attributes of the effect state are suitable to be separate from the noumenon and also do not perceive that objects of abandonment exist.



Khetsun Sangpo: The entity of the noumenon is not polluted with defilement even if adventitious defilements need to be removed.

Therefore, not in terms of the standpoint of sentient beings ranging from the ordinary [who have not generated any of the attributes of the path in their continuums] up to great Bodhisattvas at the end of their continuum [as sentient beings], but in accordance with the standpoint of singular sole Buddhahood in which the equal noumenon, unalterable and immutable in the three times, is perceived, there is no tenet of the Vajra Vehicle exceeding ascertainment by the view that basis and fruit are undifferentiable in a great sameness. This is to be known as the final meaning.

Nevertheless, because a Buddha realizes the noumenon just as it is, the body of pristine wisdom nondual with the noumenal element of attributes is permanent and stable as long as space lasts, and appearances of cyclic existence vanish as unstable.

Khetsun Sangpo: Because appearances to the six collections of consciousness are solely mistaken appearances of apprehended-object and apprehending-subject, they vanish in the face of perception of the noumenon.

Therefore, this called the basal ultimate body of the noumenon (*gzhi don dam chos nyid kyi sku*) or body of attributes (*chos sku*) is the actual body of attributes.

The object of realization [what we are finally aiming at] is the body of attributes, and from such realization the pristine wisdom body of attributes perceiving the varieties of phenomena—while being nondualistic with the sphere of non-proliferation—is achieved.

Khetsun Sangpo: In it there are no conceptual or dualistic proliferations.

And this luminosity is the final subtle basis of the Complete Enjoyment Body. Since [the pristine wisdom body of attributes] is the basis of the dawning of the effulgence of the five lights, the Complete Enjoyment Body dawns from it, and unbiased all-pervasive compassion is the final basis of the dawning of Emanation Bodies.

Khetsun Sangpo: All-pervasive compassion is unbiased in the sense that it pervades all factors of cyclic existence and nirvāṇa. Thus, it cannot be said that it pervades nirvāṇa but does not pervade cyclic existence.

Hence, this intrinsic awareness (*rig pa*) at the basal [or ordinary] time, which [contains] the undifferentiable three bodies of the basic state, is primordially enlightened (*ye nas byang chub pa*) as the entity of the Nature Body because its own entity does not fluctuate from such and is primordially unpolluted by adventitious defilements.

Khetsun Sangpo: It does not deviate, due to factors such as conceptuality, from a nature of the undifferentiable three bodies.

*Question:* If, in that way, [intrinsic awareness] is primordially budhified, then in what does mistake arise?

*Answer:* Mistake never exists in the sphere of reality. The sphere of reality never has mistake.

*Question:* Well then, who is mistaken?

*Answer:* Within the context of appearances arisen from that sphere of reality, due to apprehension as a self the fact that the sphere of reality is without I-self (*nga bdag med pa*) is not realized, and one is mistaken.

By realizing the sphere of reality in the context of appearances arisen from the sphere of reality, Samantabhadra came to be primordially released.

Khetsun Sangpo: Samantabhadra was able—right within the context of appearances arisen from the sphere of reality—to realize them as they are and secure the stronghold of release without wandering in cyclic existence, and thus is said to be primordially released.

Nevertheless, in the entity of the sphere of reality, release and mistake are essentially pure.

Khetsun Sangpo: The sphere of reality is “pure from the letter *ka*” (*ka nas dag pa*), that is to say, pure in its own essence (*rang ngo dag pa*), essentially pure.

And just as earlier, so even at the time of appearing as cyclic existence and nirvāṇa [the entity of the sphere of reality] does not fluctuate otherwise from suchness. Thus, while the basal noumenon does not ever fluctuate from that pure entity, the variegated array of the basis, path, and fruit—the vast and limitless appearances of cyclic existence and nirvāṇa [which includes all levels of realization of Hearer, Solitary Realizer, and Bodhisattva Superiors right through to Buddhahood] without the temporal boundaries of an earlier limit and a later limit [such as a beginning of cyclic existence and an end of cyclic existence] and illimitable by divisional

factors such as east and so on—in brief all of these boundless appearances of the sphere of reality within never fluctuating from the situation (*ngang*) of the very pure basal sphere of reality indivisible into factors of time and direction dawn from within its situation [like smoke arising from fire] as projective prowess (*rtsal*) and are arrayed as ornament (*rgyan*) and sport (*rol pa*).

Hence, in the Great Completeness in which the three times are realized as timeless, no phenomena of the ten directions and three times are incomplete (*ma rdzogs pa med*):

It is vast. It is great. The great *dharma*.  
The antidote of the small.

Therefore, the apprehensions that:

- This is the body of attributes at the time of the basis; due to not having purified adventitious defilements it has not matured into the entity of the fruit.
- This is the noumenon at the time of the path; some level of the obstructions has been purified [but not all].
- This is the noumenon at the time of the fruit; all adventitious defilements have been purified.

are this way with respect to the mode of appearance to sentient beings, but in terms of the mode of abiding of the noumenon there are no divisions by way of the three times, differentiations into pure and impure states, or divisions of dualistic phenomena such as sentient being and Buddha, and so forth. There is not the least fluctuation from abiding in equality.

Consequently, [the noumenon] should not be posited in accordance with the mode of appearance when the basis has not been realized and ascertained just as it is—during the basal time of sentient beings and during the path states of Bodhisattvas. For, the perception in the perspective of the perception of the fruit, very pure Buddhahood, that just this basal sphere of reality is primordially devoid of obstructions and that the Buddha attributes are primordially complete is pristine wisdom perceiving the final mode of abiding, in which the mode of abiding and mode of appearance are in full agreement.

Khetsun Sangpo: Such final mode of perception is a concordance in all ways between how things actually are and how they appear.

Therefore, in terms of the perspective of that final perception of the ultimate, this assertion by the texts of the Great Completeness that all phenomena are primordially buddhafied as entities of the fruit, Buddhahood,

is established by reasoning analyzing the final fact. Hence, no one can dispute that it is so. Consequently, the statement in the sūtras of the Great Vehicle that the matrix-of-one-gone-to-bliss is primordially endowed with the Buddha attributes of the powers and so forth is also to be taken as a definitive meaning in this way.

### 3. Distinguishing between Subtle Mind and Pristine Wisdom

Nevertheless, some hold to a system asserting:

- In terms of the mode of appearance to sentient beings, what need is there to consider whether the Buddha attributes of the ten powers manifestly exist in the ordinary continuums of common sentient beings, such as dogs, pigs, and so forth! It cannot be established that they manifestly have the mere realization of a Stream Enterer, or even the wisdom of an ordinary common being. Therefore, statements that [sentient beings] are primordially endowed with [Buddha] attributes require interpretation, due to which the reference is merely to causes [of such attributes] at Buddhahood.

Khetsun Sangpo: These scholars assert that such attributes do not exist in the basal mode of abiding, which just has *capacities* for generating these Buddha attributes.

- Also, even the explanations in Inner Mantra that basis and fruit are undifferentiable are in consideration of the mere existence of causes of Buddhahood in that way.

Khetsun Sangpo: Inner Mantra are the highest three vehicles—Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga, the last being the Great Completeness. In these systems it is said that one need merely be introduced to and recognize that the Buddha attributes of the final fruit state are primordially endowed in the basic mode of abiding, as one taste with and undifferentiable from the basic mode of abiding.

- Mere representations (*rnam pa*) of the deities of the effect state such as the pure five lineages [of Buddhas] are to be taken as the path, but these individual representations are not actual [Buddhas].

Khetsun Sangpo: In practicing deity yoga, they hold that the specific Buddhas from among the five Buddha lineages meditated are not actual Buddhas, but are just being meditated in the perspective of the mind.

Although practitioners of the generation-stage must meditate within imagining that they are an actual Vajrasattva, they think, “Since I do

not have even a sesame grain of Buddha attributes, my mental and physical aggregates and constituents are not actual Buddhas.

- Also, meditative cultivations of the illusory body and appearance of clear light in the completion-stage of Mantra are not cases of taking the uncompound entity of the noumenon as the path. Rather, through meditatively having cultivated the respective representations of those two with a compounded mind, then on the occasion of mental thorough purification a mutable momentary mind:
  - realizes all phenomena
  - manifestly constructs (*mngon par 'du byed pa*) (1) a vajra body that is permanent in the sense of its continuum [going on forever], (2) a body of great bliss endowed with the feeling of bliss which is an object of experience by it, and (3) various activities of that [vajra body]
  - knows all phenomena from the viewpoint of dualistic differentiation between knower and known
  - is released from cyclic existence
  - and is the pristine wisdom perceiver of such release.

Thinking such, they hold that a Buddha is a special person who is endowed with the five momentary and manifold aggregates purified of the defects of cyclic existence and who is differentiated as a separate continuum, although not conceived to be a self.

Consequently, not understanding even a portion of the pristine wisdom body of a Buddha and holding in their hearts a tenet positing an individual person called “Buddha,” they set forth in that way all of the presentations of the paths of sūtra and tantra, and they find fault in the dawning of an uncompound body of Buddha pristine wisdom endowed with all aspects.

Khetsun Sangpo: They assert that a Buddha is a common person who has slightly higher attributes than those of an ordinary being.

These explanations and criticisms are indeed cases of not having even gone in the direction of the intended meaning of the Great Vehicle, but since, for the time being, such seems to easily appear to the perspective of those of low intelligence, they run after the mode of appearance to totally obstructed consciousness, like the statement by the protector Maitreya:

Those who have interest in the low, whose disposition is very  
low,  
Completely surrounded by low friends,  
Do not become interested

In the elegant doctrine profound and vast.

Khetsun Sangpo: They do not know the mode of appearance of pristine wisdom.

Therefore, when the noumenon of the mind, the Great Completeness, is realized, one is established as a definitive Buddha primordially released in the nonduality of cyclic existence and nirvāṇa.

That path does not rely on any paths having signs [or, having objects of observation,] that would be superior to it—such as binding the winds [in the pot-like breath-control meditation], the trifling clear light upon the stoppage of coarse conceptions, and so on. Thus, it is said that it is not necessary to make exertion and achievement by way of the ten natures.

Khetsun Sangpo: The Great Completeness can be achieved in simultaneous [sudden] enlightenment without relying on the gradual path of the ten grounds and so forth.

Therefore, the *All-Creating Monarch*<sup>a</sup> says that:

- This is the vehicle devoid of exertion.
- Appearances of cyclic existence and nirvāṇa are arrayed as self-dawnings from the noumenon of the mind, the basal primordial mode of abiding, but in terms of the mode of abiding all whatsoever appearances are primordially wheels of exalted body, reverberations [of sounds] are primordially wheels of exalted speech, and memories and conceptions are primordially wheels of exalted mind.
- The teacher three bodies are arisen from the mind of enlightenment.

Khetsun Sangpo: The teacher body of attributes is Samantabhadra; the teacher complete enjoyment body is the five victor lineages; the teacher emanation body in particular here is our teacher Shākyamuni Buddha, although there are many emanation bodies such as Ga-rab-dor-je (*dga' rab rdo rje*) and so forth.

Since such is also stated in Long-chen-rab-jam's<sup>b</sup> *Treasury of the Element of Attributes*<sup>c</sup> and so forth in accordance with the meaning of the thought of that [tantra], these are undeniably established.

<sup>a</sup> *kun byed rgyal po / chos thams cad rdzogs pa chen po byang chub kyi sems kun byed rgyal po* (sarvadharmamahāśāntibodhicittakulayarāja), in *bka' 'gyur* (*sde dge par phud*, 828) TBRC W22084.97:1b1-86a7 (Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985).

<sup>b</sup> *klong chen rab 'byams / klong chen dri med 'od zer*, 1308-1363

<sup>c</sup> *chos dbyings rin po che'i mdzod*, in *mdzod bdun*, TBRC W12639 (Gangtok, Sikkim: Lama Dawa & Sherab Gyaltsen, 1984).

Consequently, there are not any proliferations in such a noumenon of the mind, the naturally luminous self-arisen pristine wisdom (*ye shes*); hence, the conventions of dualistic phenomena such as newly realizing or not, and so forth, do not exist in it. Mind (*sems*) exists in the dualistic manner of realizing and not realizing.

Therefore, the noumenon of the mind is the primordially abiding suchness to be realized by the path.

Khetsun Sangpo: From the viewpoint of the noumenon there is utterly no increase or decrease, improvement or degeneration, but due to the fact that our minds are obstructed, to the extent that these adventitious obstructions are purified, our realization of the noumenon improves.

And the agent realizing it is *awareness (blo)*—that is to say, the wisdoms of hearing, thinking, and meditating, which are *mentality (yid)* during occasions when the conceptuality of listening and so forth has not stopped. When this mentality is introduced to and identifies the noumenon, this mentality itself—in its realization within the noumenon—does not exist in a manner of different apprehended-object and apprehending-subject.

Khetsun Sangpo: When mentality—that is to say, the mental consciousness—identifies the natural entity of this inconceivable reality, it no longer involves a difference of apprehended-object and apprehending-subject; rather, object and subject become indivisible, the mind itself dissolving into the noumenon.

It is said that there is a jewel that causes everything seen to appear golden. Like this, when the inconceivable noumenon manifests, all factors of conceptuality vanish, turning into the noumenon itself.

Hence, you should understand that although the conventions of realizing and not realizing do not exist in the basal noumenon, these conventions of realizing and not realizing are due to sentient beings' awareness dawning from within the context of the noumenon.

Khetsun Sangpo: When you realize basal appearances as such, you are a Buddha, and when you do not realize it, you are a sentient being. This difference comes by way of basal appearances, that is to say, appearances from the basis, in the context of which we can speak of realizing or not realizing. Therefore, although in terms of the basal reality itself there are no conventions of realizing or not realizing, such conventions are applicable due to the



force of sentient beings' awarenesses that appear from within the basal reality. When you recognize these appearances as basal appearances dawning from this basis, you are released.

Concerning this, when by means of the Path of Release you are introduced to and identify the noumenal basal clear light, or mode of abiding, you sustain its continuum whereby familiarization jells.

Khetsun Sangpo: This is what is called meditation. Through meditation, you attain stability with respect to the basal clear light, which is the Samantabhadra of the basal mode of abiding.

At that time the consciousnesses of the five doors [of the senses] dissolve into mentality.

Khetsun Sangpo: Like what happens when you fall to sleep, the five sense consciousnesses—eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body consciousnesses—cease, due to which conceptuality cannot involve itself much in external objects.

Mentality dissolves into the mind-basis-of-all, which dissolves into the basis-of-all, which dissolves into the basal noumenal clear light emptiness. At this point, the consciousnesses of the eight collections have been entirely reversed and are nonexistent.

Khetsun Sangpo: All conceptual consciousnesses dissolve into the mind-basis-of-all, and it dissolves into the basis-of-all, and it dissolves into the noumenon. All of our usual consciousnesses in their entirety disappear totally and do not exist.

Nevertheless, self-arisen clear light wisdom itself, the effulgence of noumenal intrinsic awareness (*chos nyid kyi rig gdangs*)—internal, manifestly enlightened clear light exemplified by space devoid of the three polluting conditions—is identified due to earlier familiarization.

Khetsun Sangpo: You might wonder whether if all consciousnesses of the eight types dissolve and disappear, you are in a state of total unconsciousness. However, this is not the case, because due to the force of familiarization gained from earlier practice, at that point you identify the clear light that is internal manifest enlightenment. A special wisdom unlike our usual consciousness dawns.

This internal manifest enlightenment is exemplified by space, or sky, that is devoid of the three conditions that pollute (*slod*) its natural face—moonlight, sunlight, and darkness. Or, in another

way the comparison is to space that is devoid of these same three conditions that raise up or drive (*slong*) “conceptuality,” which is a name for all of our usual consciousnesses. When these conditions have totally dissolved, conceptuality cannot rise up, and thus it is like totally clear space, empty and open. You recognize your own entity, your own face, clear light, the inconceivable noumenon.

For ordinary persons without the conditioning of the path, even (1) after the reversal of the eight collections of consciousness at the time of death and (2) during thick sleep the noumenal mind, or fundamental mind, could not possibly be reversed. Since it is uncompounded and unchanging, it is not nonexistent, but because it is not recognized, this state is designated as “a state of mindless darkness” (*sems med mun pa’i gnas skabs*).

Khetsun Sangpo: If through a lama’s introducing you to the empty noumenon you have been able to gain familiarity with the effulgence of noumenal intrinsic awareness, you can recognize fundamental mind when the eight collections of consciousness disappear and cease; and right with recognition, you gain the steadfastness of release. However, in the case of an ordinary person who does not have the training of gaining familiarity with such meditation but is influenced only by earlier conceptuality of the usual type and thus is subject to mistakenness, at the time of death or at the time of the deep sleep of thick darkness when the eight collections of consciousness disappear, the mind of reality is not recognized, and you are lost in utter darkness as if totally mindless. Since there is no more than that, this is called “a state of mindless darkness.” However, it is not that the noumenal clear light is nonexistent. Why not? Although fundamental mind is uncompounded and immutable, it has just not been identified due to lack of familiarity from meditation.

In order to manifest the mind of clear light through the Path of Method, yogis—having previously practiced the generation-stage, vajra repetition, and so forth—in the completion-stage hold the mind on a subtle drop at the heart, whereupon they experience images of mirages and so forth.

Khetsun Sangpo: Yogis, in order to manifest the mind of clear light not yet actualized, engage in various techniques within the Path of Method, such as the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*. What are the methods at which they strive and make exertion? They practice

the generation-stage during which they imagine themselves as instantaneously appearing as their favored deity, and then when they are able to visualize such, they practice a type of intensive mantra repetition, called vajra repetition, which involves holding and lengthening the breath through the pot-like breathing practice and so forth. Having done these practices, then in the completion-stage in which there is particular emphasis on channels, winds, and drops and meditating on their empty mode of abiding, they hold the mind on a very subtle object of observation—a tiny drop—at the heart of their body visualized as the favored deity. The drop is extremely small like a hair and has a triple winding symbolizing the three subtle minds of white appearance, red or orange increase of appearance, and black near-attainment. When they hold their mind on that tiny drop, there are many external visions of illusory appearances such as mirages, dreams, and so forth.

Then on the occasion of the three [phases] of appearance, increase of appearance, and near-attainment they experience three appearances—vivid white, vivid red or orange, and vivid black—at the end of which a visionary experience like a cloudless sky is generated.

Khetsun Sangpo: In this phase, yogis pass through three deeper states called appearance, increase of appearance, and near-attainment. During the first, they experience something like a vast sky pervaded by white moonlight; then, when the mind of vivid white appearance dissolves into the mind of vivid red increase, they experience an increase of intensity, like a vast sky pervaded by red-dish sunlight; then when the mind of increase of appearance dissolves into the mind of near-attainment, they experience thick darkness, hardly able to remain conscious. At this point ordinary beings lose consciousness, but highly developed yogis, though they experience the onset of darkness, due to prior familiarization immediately actualize the mind of clear light even for long periods. What they experience at this point is like a cloudless sky.

Since at that time subtle mentality has not ceased, this is not the actual basal clear light but is just partially similar in aspect to it.

Khetsun Sangpo: During this experience of vivid vacuity like a completely clean sky devoid of any pollutant, such as dust particles, clouds, and so forth, a completely focused subtle mind still remains, due to which this is not the primordial basis, though sim-

ilar to it. While not the actual noumenal clear light, it is very similar to it.

By familiarizing with it again and again it eventually becomes the realizational actual clear light (*rtogs pa don gyi 'od gsal*).

Khetsun Sangpo: The problem with ordinary beings is that we are strongly accustomed to experience of impure appearances and thus are dragged along by what we are used to. Since we are not accustomed to pure appearances, we are immediately drawn into mistake. Thus we have to become accustomed to the pure. When this experience of cloudless sky similar in aspect to the clear light dawns, yogis who have familiarized with the view of reality know from the force of their prior meditation that they need to catch hold of this clear light even though it is not the actual one, and again and again get used to it. In time, through increasing familiarization with taut, one-pointed attention to the fundamental immutable noumenal clear light, not allowing straying into mistake, they make progress to the point where the secure haven, the actual clear light of true realization, is reached.

Not only [is the above visionary experience that is like a cloudless sky not the actual clear light], but also through holding the mind at night on a white *A* inside the heart then when [the sense consciousnesses] are withdrawn into sleep-consciousness, visionary experiences of the three appearances and something partially similar to clear light like pure space dawn.

Khetsun Sangpo: A quintessential instruction for apprehending the clear light is to contemplate a white *A* at your heart as you are about to sleep at night. When your imagination of it becomes stable, gradually increase it in size, first pervading your entire body, then expanding it beyond your body gradually until it fills the entire expanse of worldly realms. Falling asleep within apprehending this, you can easily catch hold of the noumenal clear light.

Going to sleep, all consciousnesses are uncontrollably withdrawn inside, but due to the force of earlier practice you can experience the three appearances—white, red, and black—and the fourth, clear light, which naturally occur during the process of going to sleep but usually are not noticed. Grosser versions of these occur when dying, whereas subtler versions occur when going to sleep and thus are harder to catch hold of. If you can catch hold of them while going to sleep, it will be easy to do so when dying.

And also by way of various quintessential instructions such as the three-fold space and so forth a visionary experience like vivid luminous space dawns.

Khetsun Sangpo: The three types of space are external space which is the sky in a vast view, internal space which is our usual empty mind, and secret space which is empty intrinsic awareness itself. In accordance with quintessential instructions for this practice, you go to an isolated place where there is a vast view, such as on a high mountain, and gaze at external space in a cloudless sky—you could look from the top of a building in a city away from anyone else, though the noise of the city would likely distract you from keeping with intrinsic awareness. In a comfortable position high on a mountain you stare at the sky, mixing external, internal, and secret space for as long as you can without any conceptuality interfering. When you can sustain the continuum of this meditation for a period of time with the three types of space mixed as one taste in a vivid vacuity into which your mind has dissolved, eventually you will even think that your body almost does not exist—everything having turned into space. If conceptuality arises, you might break that posture and do the pot-like breath meditation or perform exercises in order to remove unfavorable winds and so forth, and then enter back into meditation on the threefold space mixed as one taste without interference from conceptuality. If you have not been introduced to and identified intrinsic awareness, you do the same practice merely with the view of emptiness to which you are accustomed.

Over the period of a week, for instance, you can, through such uncommon quintessential instructions, attain progress that would be gained otherwise over months and years. In retreat away from everyone, your mind becomes totally isolated from all your activities and the like for however long you stay there—be it for a few days, a week, or more—with amazing insight within the natural flow of the mind. In time, a visionary experience like space dawns.

These are suitable as mere partial similarities with the clear light, but are not the realizational actual clear light; they are visionary experiences (*nyams*). “Visionary experiences” are dawnings to the mind of aspects partially similar to the clear light that is the mode of abiding; they are also called “metaphoric clear light” (*dpe'i 'od gsal*).

Khetsun Sangpo: These experiences, though like the mind of clear

light, are not the noumenal clear light. They are visionary experiences that merely accord with a portion of the clear light and are precursors to it, like the smoke that emerges when sticks get hotter and hotter but fire is not yet visible. We distinguish between visionary experience (*nyams*) and realization (*rtogs pa*). A more general usage of “experience” (*nyams*) also refers to mental events on the level of our usual impure modes of appearance, but here the term refers to spiritual experience on a level when although you cannot generate realization, you have many fantastic visionary experiences, the dawning of which you never experienced before. Even if the luminous mode of abiding cannot dawn in actuality to your mind, representations of it—something similar to it—shine forth. This is like training for a profession; as you get close to graduating from school, it appears to you as you take your finals and so forth that soon you will reach that level. In the same way, even though you have not arrived at the level of actual realization, you are certain that it will dawn. When these visionary experiences progress to higher and higher levels, the actual realizational clear light can dawn; you are getting closer and closer.

This is why these experiences of the clear light are called “metaphoric clear light”; they are metaphors or examples exemplifying the realizational clear light, which is therefore called the actual, or exemplified, clear light (*don gyi 'od gsal*). They are capable of serving as substitutes for the time being. They are signs of the body of attributes; since they are its effulgence, they cannot be considered entities separate from pristine wisdom, even if they are not pristine wisdom itself.

The entity of pristine wisdom is not called “visionary experience”; it is called “actual clear light” (*don gyi 'od gsal*).

Therefore, all meditations on “clear light” or “emptiness” by regular mentality (*vid rang mtshan pa*) in the manner of apprehended-object and apprehending-subject are like a moon in a painting, although an aspect partially similar to empty clear light dawns.

Khetsun Sangpo: No matter whether you are meditating on emptiness, if you are doing so with regular, or common, mentality, the object of meditation is constructed by the mind. Indeed, since you are on a level of practicing through imagination, except for imagining it to be the actual emptiness, you have not arrived at the inconceivable view transcending imagination.

This is because you are engaging in analytical meditation investigating whether phenomena truly exist or not, and upon not finding whatever phenomenon is under analysis, you come to the conclusion that it is empty of true existence, thinking, “It indeed is empty,” and in this sense you are taking emptiness as your apprehended-object and maintaining apprehension of it without forgetting it. This type of meditation does not pass beyond apprehended-object and apprehending-subject. It is hard for beginners to have meditation transcending apprehended-object and apprehending-subject.

Something like emptiness dawns, but because it is in the scope of conceptual minds, it is subject to being forgotten upon the appearance of something else. Since it can disappear, it is essentially essenceless, like a painting of the moon which, unlike the actual moon, cannot illuminate anything. To use another example: Even if you carry a picture of a brilliant lamp with you in the dark, it also is swallowed up in darkness and cannot light up anything.

When you decide—forthrightly without needing analytical adjustment—the mode of abiding of the birthlessness of your own mind in accordance with the meaning of the identified intrinsic mind (*sems nyid*) of the Great Completeness, this is the actual metaphoric pristine wisdom (*dpe'i ye shes*), like the form of the moon in water.

Khetsun Sangpo: How do you meditatively cultivate the view of the Great Completeness? Initially, the student performs the preliminary practices,<sup>a</sup> and then in the actual phase of investigation there are many uncommon techniques for identifying intrinsic mind in the tradition of the Great Completeness, at the conclusion of which the lama announces, “This indeed is the empty mode of abiding of the mind.”

- First, the lama introduces the student, or causes the student to recognize, the mistaken levels of mind—this mind now so ready from even a tiny circumstance to become happy, laugh, become sad, cry, turn angry and fight—changing this way and that. This is mistaken mind, the maker of cyclic existence.
- Then, the lama directs the student to look for the basic reality of the mind, the noumenal mind, to find out what it is like. If the student cannot get ahold of it, the lama directs the student to search for the mind itself from the crown of the head to the

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<sup>a</sup> As described, for instance, in *Tantric Practice in Nyingma*.

soles of the feet, investigating from where it initially arises; then, inbetween, where it resides; and finally where it ceases—seeking its production, abiding, and ceasing, its coming and going.

- Then, the lama introduces the student to the noumenon of the mind as empty, devoid of production, abiding, and ceasing, coming and going. But this emptiness is not like an empty vessel; rather, it has a nature of primordial Buddhahood, the immutable body of attributes. The noumenal emptiness of your mind, this changeless empty mode of abiding, is the Buddha existing within you. This is it! Separate from this, there is no view, no delineation of an outlook, no proliferations to be eliminated. When you recognize the empty mode of abiding of your own mind, this right now is the final view allowing Buddhification!

This is how the lama introduces the body of attributes contained within.

Through this, you yourself come to a conclusion regarding the view; there is no need to look into this and look into that out of doubt. Doubt at this point is poison with respect to the view; it makes the view of the Great Completeness, the view of reality, impossible. Instead, you stay with just the view that you have delineated. No matter what a thousand scholars and a hundred adepts might explain, you do not budge from your view, adjusting it this way or that, without a moment of hope or fear. You have no more need for analysis; you have decided it yourself within yourself. This is the type of decisiveness that is needed.

When you have come to such conclusiveness about the view and eliminated proliferations, this is the actual metaphoric pristine wisdom. Like a metaphor, or example, it can serve to characterize, to make known to you, what the exemplified actual pristine wisdom is. Like a reflection of the moon in water which, although it is not the moon in the sky, has the same shape, color, size, and so forth as the moon in the sky without any noticeable difference. Similarly, you have now encountered and comprehended the actual noumenon.

Meditators who realize this sort of mode of abiding of the mind—the Great Seal or Great Completeness—do not realize it with inference; rather, they directly realize it themselves, due to which many holy beings have even said, “This is the Mantra path of seeing.”



Khetsun Sangpo: This mode of abiding of the mind, called the Great Seal in the Ka-gyu tradition and called the Great Completeness in the Nyingma tradition, is itself what you are realizing. Someone might wonder whether this realization by metaphoric pristine wisdom is a case of making an inference, a supposition based on scripture and reasoning, but it is not. Then what is it? Based on the lama's first introducing you to the noumenon, you gain familiarity with this mode of abiding, and in the end actualize it in direct perception from within your own experience.

They explain that the absence of the twelve sets of a hundred attributes and so forth [which are supposed to be gained with the path of seeing] is due to being obstructed by the shell of the body.

Khetsun Sangpo: Upon attainment of the path of seeing, one also attains twelve sets of hundred attributes. At that moment one can:

1. see a hundred Buddhas in one instant
2. receive the blessings of a hundred Buddhas
3. go to a hundred Buddha Lands
4. illuminate a hundred lands
5. vibrate a hundred worldly realms
6. live for a hundred eons
7. see with true wisdom the past and future of a hundred eons
8. enter into and rising from a hundred meditative stabilizations
9. open a hundred different doors of doctrine
10. ripen a hundred sentient beings
11. emanate a hundred versions of one's own body
12. surround each of the hundred bodies with a hundred Bodhi-sattvas

Thus, the question arises: If one has manifestly perceived the Great Completeness and if this is called the path of seeing of Mantra, why does one not have any of these twelve sets of one hundred wonderful attributes? In reply, many holy beings of the past have explained that it is because of being obstructed by the shell of the body. The mind is trapped by the shell of consciousness, and consciousness is trapped by the shell of the body—the mental and physical aggregates that have been stuck in suffering over many lives. Thus, until mind is released from the shell of the body, the one hundred sets of twelve attributes and so forth cannot manifest themselves. It is said that for someone who has manifested metaphoric pristine wisdom, when the mind has cast aside the shell of

the body and has emerged, the one hundred sets of twelve attributes and so forth instantaneously and spontaneously manifest themselves.

Long-chen-rab-jam asserts that although this [metaphoric pristine wisdom] is not the actual path of seeing of Mantra, it is an actual realization of noumenal thusness (*chos nyid de bzhin nyid*), and since a path of seeing must have the twelve sets of a hundred attributes and so forth, although this is self-cognizing direct perception (*rang rig mngon sum*), it is metaphoric pristine wisdom. He asserts that the actual [exemplified] pristine wisdom is the path of seeing, like actually seeing the moon.

Khetsun Sangpo: The omniscient Long-chen-rab-jam, the inconceivably wise master of Nyingma, says that in terms of view this is actual realization of the noumenon, but because the attributes associated with the path of seeing are not complete due to the shell of the body, this is not the actual pristine wisdom, which, like actually seeing the moon, is the path of seeing in terms of both manifestly perceiving the noumenon and actualizing the attributes of that level, but is a metaphoric pristine wisdom.

Hence, there are those for whom pristine wisdom does not dawn and who seek for the meaning of the Great Completeness in consciousness due to confusing the object of realization and the means of realization and also due to the fact that mentality among the eight collections of consciousness and self-arisen discriminative wisdom that is self-projective prowess beyond the eight collections are similar in having the character of discrimination.

Khetsun Sangpo: The object of realization is what you are seeking to actualize, the profound view. Among the means of realization is a subtle, compounded mind. Some people have confused these two, due to which they seek for the Great Completeness within consciousness. Also, for a beginner it is difficult to differentiate between the mentality that is within the eight collections of consciousness and self-arisen discriminative wisdom, which actually is the self-projective prowess of pristine wisdom beyond consciousness, because they are similar in having the nature of wisdom, which is discrimination of what is real and what is not. To beginners these two might seem to be similar.

Their proposition that “fundamental mind,” which is what is taught by the Great Completeness, is a subtle mind is extremely mistaken.

Khetsun Sangpo: Pristine wisdom—the inconceivable noumenon beyond subtle mind—dawns naturally and spontaneously, not from making adjustments within consciousness. Therefore, those who confuse the Great Completeness with subtle mind and seek it within consciousness err greatly. One such scholar is Ja-pa Do-ngag.<sup>a</sup>

For, although fundamental mind, matrix-of-One-Gone-to-Bliss, mind of clear light, ultimate mind of enlightenment, self-arisen pristine wisdom, and element of attributes are different in that they can be isolated nominally, they do not differ in meaning, and although the two—cyclic existence and nirvāṇa—appear from within the sphere of such an uncompounded fundamental mind of clear light, it is not that the clear light itself is established as the continuum of those two, cyclic existence or nirvāṇa, or is established as them.

Khetsun Sangpo: Ja-pa Do-ngag made a huge mistake because although cyclic existence and nirvāṇa appear from within the sphere of the uncompounded fundamental mind of clear light like clouds, birds, and so forth appearing in space, the noumenal clear light does not thereby become changeable, just as the entity of space does not change due to the presence of clouds and so on. In the face of the mind of clear light cyclic existence and nirvāṇa are not dual; rather, the mind of clear light is all-pervasive, like space.

This present mentality included within the continuums of individual sentient beings is:

Khetsun Sangpo: The phrase “included within the continuum” refers in general to all factors pervaded by a particular being’s feeling. Here the reference is to a particular being’s eight consciousnesses.

- a compounded phenomenon produced from four conditions

Khetsun Sangpo: Mentality is produced from four conditions—causal condition, immediately preceding condition, observed-object-condition, and empowering condition. Except for being produced in dependence upon these conditions, the eight consciousnesses are not self-arisen, like fundamental mind, due to which they are compounded phenomena.

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<sup>a</sup> ‘ja’ pa mdo sngags. For Mi-pam-gya-tsho’s extensive refutation of Ja-pa Do-ngag’s opinions, see *Fundamental Mind: The Nyingma View of the Great Completeness*, 23ff. and chapters three and four.

- a mind whose obstructions are not yet purified
- included within trifling continuums

Khetsun Sangpo: The eight consciousnesses operate in those whose scope of thought is tiny.

- involved with apprehended-object and apprehending-subject
- restricted (*ris su chad pa*) because of not being all-pervasive

Khetsun Sangpo: Unlike the all-pervasive noumenon, mentality pervades only your own consciousnesses.

and so forth, and therefore, if it were the matrix-of-One-Gone-to-Bliss and basal clear light Great Completeness, then [fundamental mind] would have to be the above-mentioned five—compounded and so forth. Whereas that is the case, not even in any text [neither in India nor in Tibet] teaching the Great Completeness is it taught that the noumenon is compounded, impure, included within a trifling continuum, involved with apprehended-object and apprehending-subject, and restricted without being all-pervasive. Hence, this [teaching that the Great Completeness is a compounded subtle mind] is not the Great Completeness known by Ga-rab-dor-Jey (*dga' rab rdo rje*) and so forth, due to which it is suitable to analyze who, in this later time, taught this Great Completeness that goes beyond the earlier teachers and their lineages.

Khetsun Sangpo: Coming upon such an explanation, we should look into who taught it since it contradicts what was taught earlier by the great masters of the Nyingma tradition.

However, it is not suitable to repeat what occurs in [their fabrications].

This explanation that:

- all of cyclic existence and nirvāṇa appears from within the sphere of the Great Completeness, intrinsic awareness, the mind of enlightenment,
- but all appearances and occurrences—due to not becoming other than the noumenon—are spontaneously established without exertion as naturally pure Buddha Lands

is the central topic taught by the vehicle of the exertionless Great Completeness, a distinctive feature of that path.

Khetsun Sangpo: Though all the phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvāṇa dawn from within the sphere of the Great Completeness, they never deviate from the naturally pure domain of the Great Completeness, at all times unchanging like space. Because

all views are complete in its domain, it is called the Great Completeness.

If a subtle mind within the eight collections of consciousness is the noumenal fundamental mind, then are you going to propound that the primeval basal clear light that is not differentiated into cyclic existence and nirvāṇa arises from within the present momentary subtle mind? If so, then subtle mind would have to exist prior to the primeval clear light, and are you going to assert that this subtle mind pervades all past Buddhas, such as Dīpaṃkara and so forth, the six types [of transmigrating beings], and all the stable and the moving [that is, the inanimate and the animate] and that they abide within it? Such a momentary [subtle mind] is amazing!

Khetsun Sangpo: Such a momentary subtle mind that Ja-pa Dongag asserts is indeed strange; it has never existed among objects of knowledge.

When such a subtle mind is realized, how does it help in manifesting the perspective that all appearing and occurring phenomena are naturally pure? Have you not asserted that when someone, who has not previously experienced meditation delineating emptiness by means of that [subtle mind], newly meditates on emptiness by means of it, it is a cause of a Buddha's omniscient exalted mind? Therefore, since the basal noumenon has not been identified from having realized that [subtle mind] and having taken it as the path, that [subtle mind] is a particular instance of a mind of a sentient being, and hence how could it be fundamental mind! If fundamental mind is noumenal mind, or pristine wisdom, dwelling in all minds the way moisture pervades water, this [subtle mind] is exhausted as one particular subject limited (*nyi tshe ba*) [to that person's continuum], and is not mixed with the basis-of-all, mind-basis-of-all, coarse mentality, or the consciousnesses of the five doors [that is, the five sense consciousnesses]—not mixed with any of them because you have asserted that it does not exist in those factors that are the consciousnesses of the five doors, coarse mentality (*vid rags pa*), and the basis-of-all. Therefore, since on occasions when the consciousnesses of the six collections have not ceased, the Great Completeness could not be introduced and identified by the wisdoms of hearing and thinking, the statements that the Great Completeness is the Path of Release that is the lama's final quintessential instruction would be senseless. Since introduction and identification [of the Great Completeness] upon hearing a lama's guidance could not occur, it would most absurdly follow that all of these texts would be senseless.

*Objection:* There is no such fallacy. Even at a time when the six consciousnesses exist, this [subtle mind] is fundamental mind, due to which it exists without stoppage, and hence it is introduced and identified.

*Answer:* Then it is senseless to make a differentiation into gross and subtle [minds]. When this present consciousness itself is introduced and identified as without production, the basal clear light or noumenon of the mind has been realized, but you need to explain the meaning [of your assertion that] the Great Completeness is not identifiable in the context of the consciousnesses of the five doors as well as the coarse mental consciousness but is identifiable in the context of the subtle.

Furthermore, if the continuum of this fundamental mind [which you assert to be a subtle mind] never halts, it would have to be the taker of rebirth and would have to be the agent of buddhification.

Khetsun Sangpo: The actual fundamental mind itself exists forever, never ceasing.

Hence, what fallacy would there be if it is asserted that [this subtle mind] is a self of persons? If you think, “Because it is impermanent, it not a self,” then if you asserted an impermanent self, it would be totally okay! Moreover, is it suitable to assert the basal noumenon or path noumenon is impermanent?

Therefore, a noumenal pristine wisdom or a mind of naturally clear light that is not a subtle mind is established as existing. The regent Maitreya says:<sup>a</sup>

It is said that aside from noumenal mind

Any other mind has a nature that is not clear light.

Consequently, it is a great mistake to designate a subtle mind as the fundamental mind of clear light; the natural mind of clear light, or pristine wisdom of clear light, and subtle mind are extremely contradictory, and hence are different.

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<sup>a</sup> Maitreya, *Ornament of the Great Vehicle Sūtras*, *theg pa chen po mdo sde'i rgyan zhes bya ba'i tshig le'ur byas pa* (*mahāyānasūtrāṃkārikā*), in *bstan 'gyur* (*sde dge*, 4020), TBRC W23703.123:3-80 (Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985); XIII.19. Sanskrit in Lévi, *Mahāyāna-Sūtrāṃkāra*, 88:

*matam ca cittam prakṛtiprabhāsvaraṃ sadā tadāgantukadoṣadūṣitam/  
na dharmatācittamṛte 'nyacetasaḥ prabhāsvaratvaṃ prakṛtau vidhīyate//*

For Döl-po-pa Shay-rab-gyal-tshan's citation of these lines with more context, see Jeffrey Hopkins, *Mountain Doctrine: Tibet's Fundamental Treatise on Other-Emptiness and the Buddha Matrix* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion Publications, 2006), 520.

Khetsun Sangpo: It is necessary to differentiate between immutable noumenal mind and mistaken mind; they are entirely opposite, like fire and water. Minds other than the ultimate noumenal mind are not fundamental minds and not minds of clear light. What are they? They are the mistaken minds of ordinary beings, like the ones we presently have.

Moreover, does this subtle mind exist or not at a time when coarse mental conceptualization (*yid kyi kun rtog rags pa*) has not stopped? If it does not, then it is not fundamental mind because a continuation (*rgyun*) of it does not exist.

Khetsun Sangpo: If this subtle mind that is claimed to be fundamental mind does not exist when minds of coarse conceptuality are operating, then its continuum has ceased and does not exist at that time. Thus, how could it be fundamental mind? It could not.

If this subtle mind does exist at a time when coarse mental conceptualization has not stopped, does it exist as one with or different from coarse mind? If it exists as one with coarse mind, then you would be asserting that this mental consciousness is both a subtlety in which coarse conceptualization does not exist and a coarseness in which coarse conceptualization does exist. This new Great Completeness having that strange assertion combining contradictions in one substratum is astonishing!

If this subtle mind exists as different from coarse mind, it must exist as different from the coarse one that is generated from the four conditions; different effective things are due to different causes. In that case, two continuums of mentality must exist with equal capacity in the continuum of one person.

Khetsun Sangpo: One person would have to have two mental consciousnesses, one coarse and another subtle, at the same time.

*Objection:* Even though two continuums of mentality exist with equal capacity in the continuum of one person, there is no fallacy, as is the case with the eight collections of consciousness.

Khetsun Sangpo: The opponent objects that there is no problem at all with having two mental consciousnesses at the same time, since, for example, one sentient being similarly has all eight consciousnesses at the same time.

*Answer:* Among the eight collections of consciousness,

- the mind-basis-of-all is the cause of all sentient beings and is luminous and non-conceptual,

Khetsun Sangpo: Predispositions deposited in the mind-basis-of-all by former actions ripen as the lives of sentient beings. The mind-basis-of-all itself is luminous and non-conceptual.

- mentality (*vid*) differentiates everything external and internal

Khetsun Sangpo: Here, “mentality” is the mental consciousness, which performs both external and internal activities and also distinguishes between the external and the internal.

- the five doors [that is, the five sense consciousnesses] are differentiated from viewpoint of depending on the sense powers that are their dominant conditions,

Khetsun Sangpo: Just as the eye sense power acts as the dominant condition of an eye consciousness, so it is with the other sense powers—ear, nose, tongue, and body. In dependence upon their individual dominant conditions, the five sense consciousnesses perform their respective functions without confusion.

but they are one continuum that is included internally within the consciousnesses of one being. However, if coarse and subtle minds are not just states—[the mind] being subtle upon the absencing of the coarse and being coarse upon the absencing of the subtle—then two minds must exist simultaneously, with the subtle always subtle and not experienced as coarse, and the coarse [always coarse and] not experienced as subtle.

Khetsun Sangpo: If the coarse and subtle minds are not just the states of one mind, they would be two minds existing simultaneously—the coarse mind would always be coarse, and the subtle mind would always be subtle.

In that case, whereas persons through their own direct perception know in their own experience the two—coarse mind such as while awake and subtle mind such as during dreams—how do they know that this sort of subtle mind exists? Is it through direct perception, through inference, or through scripture?

If it is the case that when this subtle [mind] trains in meditating on emptiness and so forth, it is fit to apprehend these, why does it not also apprehend coarse objects?

Khetsun Sangpo: If subtle mind engages in a process of learning emptiness, then it would have to apprehend coarse objects.



If it does not also apprehend coarse objects, then how is it able to delineate that all phenomena—the external and internal sense-spheres and so forth—are empty? Therefore, what is the use of causing it to meditate on emptiness? Consequently, the assertion of such a fundamental mind is a very great error.

Furthermore, with respect to the difference between consciousness and pristine wisdom, since conceptualization of the three spheres [of object, agent, and action] is the obstruction to omniscience, that which abandons it is non-conceptual pristine wisdom. The vajra-like meditative stabilization—the uninterrupted path at the end of the continuum [of being a sentient being] which is the final pristine wisdom on the paths of learning [the paths of accumulation, preparation, seeing, and meditation]—eradicates the predispositions of the conceptualization of dualistic appearance, whereby one becomes a Buddha not at all having the defilements of the two obstructions from that point on. Therefore, since all minds and mental factors included within the three realms [of desire, form, and formlessness] do not pass beyond conceptuality, they are called “consciousness.” Jñānagarbha’s *Two Truths* says:<sup>a</sup>

Minds and mental factors involved in the three realms  
Are conceptual consciousnesses having the aspect of superimposition.

Khetsun Sangpo: The six main minds and fifty-one mental factors of the desire, form, and formless realms are all involved in superimpositions, exaggerations of what in fact do not exist. None of these are established in fact.

and the master Dignāga says:

There is not anything to be called cyclic existence  
Aside from conceptuality.  
Through having become separated from conceptuality  
You thoroughly pass beyond sorrow.

Khetsun Sangpo: If you search for cyclic existence as something other than conceptuality, you will not find it. When conceptuality is eradicated, then everything is nirvāṇa.

<sup>a</sup> Jñānagarbha, *bden pa gnyis rnam par 'byed pa'i tshig le'ur byas pa*, in *bstan 'gyur* (*sde dge*, 3881), TBRC W23703.107:4-8 (Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985).

In brief, because conceptuality (*rnam rtog*) is consciousness (*rnam shes*), and non-conceptuality (*rnam par mi rtog pa*) is primordial consciousness (*ye shes*), these two are very different.

Khetsun Sangpo: How are conceptuality and pristine wisdom to be distinguished? In brief, conceptual consciousnesses are the six types of consciousness with which we are familiar—eye consciousness, ear consciousness, and so forth. We are all familiar with them—their respective activities, agents, and objects, but what we do not know is non-conceptuality, pristine wisdom. Since it is the inconceivable noumenon, the final fruit, the great pristine wisdom, we do not presently recognize it, and thus it is to be ascertained by way of the view. You need to differentiate between pristine wisdom, which is an object of activity of Superiors, and the consciousnesses of ordinary beings. The difference is very great, like the difference between earth and sky.

On the occasion of the final pristine wisdom, the movement of minds and mental factors totally stops.

Khetsun Sangpo: At the time of the final pristine wisdom, the movement of the six consciousnesses and fifty-one mental factors—all of the various movements of taking to mind all sorts of things, remembering this and remembering that, as well appearances of good, bad, and so forth—utterly cease, becoming nonexistent.

A tantra says, “The Buddhas of the three times have separated from mind.”

Khetsun Sangpo: By giving up mind the past, present, and future Buddhas attain the fruit of Buddhahood.

and a sūtra says:

Shāntamati, the inconceivable secrecy of exalted mind (*thugs*) of a One-Gone-Thus is separated from mind (*sems*), mentality (*vid*), and consciousness (*rnam shes*), but it has not discarded the state of meditative stabilization. This is the inconceivable secrecy of exalted mind of a One-Gone-Thus.

Khetsun Sangpo: A Buddha has separated from the six collections of consciousness, but does this mean that a Buddha’s mind has become like matter? No, it does not. Being endowed with pristine

wisdom beyond consciousness, it has not abandoned, does not discard the status of inconceivable meditative stabilization. This pristine wisdom—the replacement, so to speak, of mind—is the inconceivable secrecy of exalted mind of a One-Gone-Thus, the natural, innate, pristine wisdom that, attained in dependence upon the Mantra path, makes achievement so quick.

and:

Separated from words, not polluted by the path of speech,  
Thusness, the nature of phenomena, like space,  
Thoroughly released from the movements of mind and mentality,  
The supreme, the highest, the fantastic, the sacred is to be  
known.

This factuality cannot be known through letters.

It is known by the astute.

When sentient beings, remaining after the previous Buddhas,  
Hear this doctrine, they develop belief.

and Chandrakīrti's *Supplement to (Nāgārjuna's) "Treatise on the Middle"* also says: "Minds having ceased, it is actualized by the body."<sup>a</sup>

Therefore, when even predispositions for dualistic appearance no longer exist, how could there be consciousness involving dualistic appearance or apprehended-object and apprehending-subject?

Khetsun Sangpo: When not only manifest dualistic appearance but even predispositions for such appearance no longer exist, not even a little bit of consciousness involved in apprehended-object and apprehending-subject could possibly exist.

There is non-conceptual pristine wisdom; it is the great pristine wisdom, the exalted mind of a Buddha. That pristine wisdom vividly knows all phenomena while not having conceptuality.

Khetsun Sangpo: It knows the mode of abiding or noumenon of all phenomena ranging from forms through to omniscience vividly like olives in the palm of the hand. For this reason, it is not called "mind"; mind has stopped—it is the pristine wisdom that is the final fruit.

<sup>a</sup> Chandrakīrti, *dbu ma la 'gyur pa'i bshad pa (madhyamakāvatārabhāṣyanāma)*, in *bstan 'gyur (sde dge, 3862)*, TBRC W23703.102:442-697 (Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985); XI.17d/XII.8d; *sde dge 3862, dbu ma*, vol. 'a, 332a.1; La Vallée Poussin, *Madhyamakāvatāra*, 362.6.

Hence, such pristine wisdom is not called “mind.”

If it is nominally designated as “mind” from the viewpoint of its factor of knowing and so forth, it is specified as great mind (*sems chen po*), or fundamental mind, or the mind of clear light, and so forth, but since it is without any aspect of ordinary conceptuality, apprehended-object and apprehending-subject, and the eight collections of consciousness, it is called “non-conceptual pristine wisdom,” “nondualistic pristine wisdom,” and with the names of the five pristine wisdoms.

Khetsun Sangpo: Even if, thinking about the fact that pristine wisdom knows and, similarly, our minds know this and that, we merely nominally designate pristine wisdom as “mind” from the viewpoint of its factor of knowing and so forth, we indeed have to understand that it really is not mind, much as when a child is named “Buddha” but actually is not a Buddha.

If a Buddha’s pristine wisdom still had conceptuality or still involved the dualistic appearance of apprehended-object and apprehending-subject or were ordinary like the basis-of-all, mentality, or the like, then it would not be reasonable to assert that through the power of the path the predispositions of conceptuality and the predispositions of dualistic appearance are extinguished or the eight collections of consciousness are transformed into the five pristine wisdoms.

Khetsun Sangpo: Absurdly, you would have to say that the predispositions of conceptuality and the predispositions of dualistic appearance could not be removed through the power of realizing emptiness—the inconceivable noumenon—upon meditatively cultivating the five paths and ten Bodhisattva grounds. Transformation of the eight collections of consciousness into Buddhahood would be impossible.

Nevertheless, in the perspective of how things appear to trainees, there are designations of a Buddha’s eye consciousness, mental consciousness, and so forth, which are cases of designating the effect with the name of the cause. However, the consciousnesses of the causal state, having ceased, are a body of pristine wisdom of the effect state, and hence these are not regular ordinary consciousnesses and aggregates.

In your system [that is, Ja-pa Do-ngag’s system], apprehensional and conceptual love, and so on, and six perfections are the path, but love and so on and the six perfections that are conjoined with pristine wisdom without apprehension of the three spheres [of object, agent, and action] and are non-conceptual would not be right paths. In that case, worldly perfections,

love, and so on would be the actual perfections, whereas supramundane perfections and so forth would not be right paths.

*Question:* Just what is non-conceptual pristine wisdom?

*Answer:* It does not conceptualize anything.

Khetsun Sangpo: No matter what appears to us—forms, sounds, odors, tastes, touches, and so forth—it does not conceptualize anything.

Why? Because it is pristine wisdom realizing the mode of abiding, the sphere of reality.

Khetsun Sangpo: If it does not conceptualize anything, would it be a case of the mind's totally going blank? No, the reason why it does not conceptualize anything is that it does not involve any mistaken mind but is the pristine wisdom that is the final fruit realizing the inconceivable mode of abiding.

The sphere of reality has not fallen to an extreme of thing or non-thing, existing or not existing. Aside from being the undifferentiability of the two truths [conventional and ultimate truth that have become one taste, beyond all words] known by oneself individually, it is beyond all conventional designations of the objects of activity of conceptuality. Due to this the Victor-Child Shāntideva says:<sup>a</sup>

When things and non-things  
Do not dwell in front of awareness,  
Then since there is no other aspect,  
It is thoroughly pacified in non-apprehension.

and a tantra says:

Whoever does not know the unapprehendable  
Does not know the sphere of reality.  
Therefore, know that it is without apprehension  
Since things and non-things have disintegrated.

<sup>a</sup> Śāntideva, *byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa (bodhi[sattva]caryāvatāra)*, in *bstan 'gyur (sde dge, 3871)*, TBRC W23703.105:3-81 (Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985); IX.35; D3871, *dbu ma*, vol. *la*, 32a.4-.6; see also the translation in Stephen Batchelor, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* (Dharmasala, India: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1979), 140; Sanskrit in Das Shastri, *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, 305.

The *Vajragarbha Commentary* says:<sup>a</sup>

From a millet seed  
Rice does not emerge.  
The fruit arising from  
A conceptual seed is conceptual.

Khetsun Sangpo: Just as a seed of a poisonous plant produces only poison, so any fruit that arises from a seed of conceptuality is only conceptual. Just as from a seed of a medicinal plant, a medicinal plant arises, so the fruits produced from non-conceptuality are non-conceptual.

Hence, a non-conceptual pristine wisdom observing an emptiness that is a non-affirming negative utterly does not exist.

Khetsun Sangpo: When the object of observation is a mere emptiness—for instance, the absence of production—one is thinking “This is empty.” With this as the cause, the effect could not possibly be non-conceptual pristine wisdom.

If it is necessary to observe the absence of true existence, then although indeed one would not be conceptualizing true existence, why would one not be conceptualizing the absence of true existence? If one is conceptualizing, then no matter whether one conceptualizes a thing or a non-thing, it does not pass beyond conceptuality.

Khetsun Sangpo: If you are conceptualizing a thing involving apprehended-object and apprehending-subject or if you are conceptualizing a non-thing such a uncompounded space or a mere emptiness, except for conceptualizing either of these, you cannot realize what is beyond conceptuality.

This is like the fact that when one conceptualizes that the horn of a rabbit does not exist, even though one does not have conceptuality apprehending the horn of a rabbit, one has conceptuality apprehending the horn of a rabbit as nonexistent—there is no way to avoid conceptuality that has an absence of true existence as its object. If there is no [way to avoid conceptuality that has an absence of true existence as its object], then even if one is

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<sup>a</sup> Vajragarbha's (*rdo rje snying po*) *Extensive Commentary on the "Condensed Meaning of the Hevajra Tantra,"* kye'i rdo rje bsdus pa'i don gyi rgya cher 'grel pa (*hevajrapīṇḍārthāṭikā*), in *bstan 'gyur* (*sde dge*, 1180(a)), TBRC W23703.2:2-253 (Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985); Peking 2310, vol. 53.

not apprehending [phenomena] as truly established, how could one avoid the conceptuality of all phenomena such as pots and so forth? That is to say, there is no way to avoid such conceptuality.

Therefore, whether it is a conceptual consciousness of a negative phenomenon or a conceptual consciousness of a positive phenomenon, it does not pass beyond conceptual consciousness. Non-conceptual pristine wisdom, however, is not either a conceptualization of a negation or a conceptualization of an affirmative phenomenon; it does not conceptualize anything.

*Objection:* The subject,<sup>a</sup> a non-conceptual pristine wisdom, is a conceptualization of a negative phenomenon because of being devoid of proliferation. It is a conceptualization negating proliferation and a conceptualization affirming voidness of proliferation.

*Answer:* Within the stoppage of all proliferations, how could there be apprehension thinking, “This is voidness of proliferation”? If there is [such a thought], then all proliferations still would not have ceased, whereby it would not be devoid of proliferations.

Therefore, it must be said that non-conceptual pristine wisdom manifestly actualizes the sphere of reality, the ultimate, the mode of abiding, and emptiness, but [this so-called ultimate that you are describing] is not [even] the enumerated ultimate and emptiness that is one of the divisions of the two truths. Rather, it is a bare emptiness (*stong rkyang*). Hence, when this is conceptualized, it is a conceptualization of a negation.

The undifferentiable two truths—which is the emptiness endowed with all supreme aspects and the object of individual self-knowledge—is the final sphere of reality and the final emptiness. When it is realized, aside from conventionally differentiating that the sphere of reality is the object realized and pristine wisdom is the means of realization, in fact these are not in the least different.

The definition of a consciousness is: that which is a luminous and cognitive and has a nature of conceptuality. The definition of a pristine wisdom is: the clear light nature that is non-conceptual, is the mode of abiding, and is known by oneself individually. The noumenon of consciousness is pristine wisdom.

Khetsun Sangpo: No matter whether a consciousness is one of the five sense consciousnesses or the mental consciousness, its noumenon, its final reality, is pristine wisdom.

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<sup>a</sup> The term “subject” here indicates the subject of the syllogism; the predicate is “a conceptual consciousness”; the reason is “devoid of proliferation.”

The definition of Buddha is: a final pristine wisdom that is thoroughly purified of the two obstructions [to liberation from cyclic existence and to omniscience] as well as their predispositions.

Khetsun Sangpo: Predispositions are exemplified by the odor of musk left in a cup even after you have removed the musk and cleaned the cup. Even in the cup, the odor of musk remains because musk is so smelly. Similarly, we are so used to the afflictive obstructions and to the obstructions to omniscience for such a long time that were we even to stop those two obstructions and cleanse the mind of them, we would still have the odor, the predispositions, established by those obstructions. However, just as by repeatedly cleaning the cup, the odor of musk is entirely cleaned away, the two obstructions are eventually removed. That is Buddhahood.

By way of conceptually isolatable factors (*ldog cha*), this pristine wisdom is designated “pristine wisdom knowing the mode of being”<sup>a</sup> from the viewpoint of its perception of the noumenon and “pristine wisdom of the diversity” from the viewpoint of its perceiving all of the phenomena qualified by that noumenon,

Khetsun Sangpo: The pristine wisdom that is the exalted mind of a Buddha perceives all conventional phenomena without confusion, keeping all of their details very clear.

but in entity these do not differ from the one sole pristine wisdom knowing all aspects. This is the pristine wisdom perceiving the final mode of abiding of the undifferentiable two truths.

Khetsun Sangpo: Though there are these designations of pristine wisdom’s knowing the mode of being of phenomena and the diversity of phenomena, their entity is the sole noumenal pristine wisdom that knows all aspects. Aside from that, these are not different. They are simply the Buddha’s pristine wisdom perceiving conventional and ultimate truths as the non-different, nondual final mode of abiding of one taste.

Therefore, in accordance with the statement in the *Sūtra Unraveling the Thought*.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> *ji lta ba*; literally, “the how,” or more loosely, “the how it is.”

<sup>b</sup> *’phags pa dgongs pa nges par ’grel pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po’i mdo* (*āryasaṃdhinirmocanānāmamahāyānasūtra*), in *bka’ ’gyur* (*sde dge par phud*, 106),



The character of the compounded realm and of the ultimate  
 Is a character devoid of sameness and difference.  
 Those who conceptualize either sameness or difference  
 Are involved in improper views.

Long-chen-rab-jam said that the two—the eight collections of consciousness which are phenomena qualified by the noumenon and the pristine wisdom which is their nature—are not assertable as either one or different.

Khetsun Sangpo: It cannot be asserted that conventional factors—the eight collections of consciousness—and their noumenal emptiness are one, and it cannot be asserted that they are different. Why? Because of being the noumenon devoid of sameness of difference.

Hence, in conventional terms those two are not one because:

- through merely realizing the mind you have not realized the pristine wisdom that is the noumenon of the mind, and
- these two are (1) that which is qualified with the noumenon and (2) the noumenon, and so forth.

Khetsun Sangpo: The phenomena in which the noumenon dwells and the noumenon itself are not one even in conventional terms. Why? Because through merely being aware of the mind you have not realized the pristine wisdom that is the noumenon of the mind. Also, they are not one because consciousness is that in which the noumenon dwells, and pristine wisdom is the noumenon.

Ultimately, they are not different:

- because when pristine wisdom is realized, mind is not observed as different from it since the nature of the mind is pristine wisdom, and
- because when pristine wisdom is realized, mind dawns in self-release, and so forth.

Khetsun Sangpo: No matter whether a consciousness and the pristine wisdom that is its final nature conventionally appear to be different, ultimately they are not different; that is to say, in the face of realization of the ultimate they are of one taste. The nature, or noumenon, of the mind is pristine wisdom; hence, they cannot be made into being different. When you are able to realize pristine

wisdom, the mind that is the substratum, so to speak, of its realization, cannot be observed as different from it. Also, ultimately consciousness and pristine wisdom are not different because when pristine wisdom, difficult to realize, is realized, mind perforce dawns in self-release.

Therefore, this essential is very important.

When analyzed in that way, the noumenal actual clear light pervades Buddhas and sentient beings as their own mode of abiding, like space.

Khetsun Sangpo: Like space, vast and unlimited, the clear light pervades all beings, ranging from Buddhas through to all sentient beings, as their inconceivable noumenon. There is no Buddha it does not pervade, and there is no sentient being it does not pervade.

However, in its mode of appearance as the separate noumenon of the mind of an individual person, who possesses the continuums of each of the eight collections of minds, [the noumenon] appears to be restricted (*ris chad du snang*), like the space inside a pot. Hence, there also are indeed appearances [of the noumenon] correspondent to the basis, path, and fruit, but in fact, aside from appearing from within the great entirely pervasive noumenon, there is no establishment of it as separate and individual.

Khetsun Sangpo: In terms of the mode of appearance of the noumenon of the mind of an individual person who possesses the continuums, like streams of water, of each of the eight collections of consciousness—that is, in terms of the mode of appearance of noumenon in this separated-out fashion as the noumenon of the mind of this person and of that person—the noumenon appears to be limited. It is then like the space inside a pot; even though great space is undifferentiated, we have the sense that there is a small space in a small pot. Hence, there are indeed these appearances of the basal noumenon, path noumenon, and fruit noumenon.

Due to the karmic appearances of each individual sentient being, even though the great pervasive noumenon, reality, dwells in their minds, all that is manifest to them is like the appearance of the tiny space inside a pot. In fact the noumenon pervades all phenomena, from forms through to omniscient knowledge. The minds of a sentient beings dwell within it, but due to mistake, nothing but something most tiny is manifest to them. In their tiny, mistaken perspective they are separated off, but in terms of the noumenal mode of abiding, reality is all-pervasive and of one taste;

there is nothing outside of this.

Therefore, regarding sentient beings designated in the context of the mode of appearance of adventitious mistake, it is not necessary that if one is released, all would be released, and if one is mistaken, all would be mistaken.

Khetsun Sangpo: Someone might wonder whether a consequence of this doctrine would be that if one sentient being is liberated, all would have to be liberated, or if one is not liberated, none would be. However, this is not the case because sentient beings' mental continuums are different.

All mistake and release are similar and do not differ with respect to arising from within the original basal noumenon; hence, in terms of the primordial naturally pure noumenon it must be posited that sentient beings are primordially buddhified because a Buddha arises from realizing the equality of cyclic existence and peace.

Khetsun Sangpo: When any sentient being realizes the equality of cyclic existence and peace, that sentient being becomes a Buddha.

Hence, all delineations of the profound paths of the cause and effect vehicles are for the sake of attaining the final fruit through delineating the noumenal suchness and thereupon cultivating this in meditation. Consequently, all of the tenets of the Vajra Vehicle are constructed in terms of noumenal reasoning. Not only that, but also even through the path of the Middle Way one realizes the noumenon and thereupon cultivates it in meditation. That one would be released through meditation predominated by the perspective of dualistic appearance of substrata was not set forth by Buddha in any cause or effect vehicle.

Khetsun Sangpo: No one could be liberated through meditation that is organized around substrata—that is to say, around conventional phenomena from between the noumenon and the conventional phenomena that are qualified by the noumenon—because that perspective is dualistic. Buddha did not set forth either the cause vehicle—the sūtra vehicle, the vehicle of the perfections—or in the effect vehicle, the vehicle of mantra, that one could be released through cultivating a path the predominant perspective of which is from the viewpoint of dualistically perceiving consciousness.

In terms of the ultimate mode of abiding in this manner, it must be asserted that all occurring appearances whatsoever are primordially buddhified, and one must meditate that way. However, it is asserted by [all systems] through to the Great Completeness that in terms of the conventional mode of appearance one must discriminate with wisdom that there are three:

- a *basis* that is the lineage of suitability to become buddhified

Khetsun Sangpo: In the basal, or ordinary, state all sentient beings are fit to be enlightened and thus have the Buddha lineage.

- phases of practicing the *path*
- the *fruit* which is the completion of purity.

Khetsun Sangpo: In terms of the conventional mode of appearance of things, one must discriminate with intelligence that there are the three phases of basis, path, and fruit. This is asserted by all vehicles, beginning with the Hearer and Solitary Realizer vehicles, up through the Bodhisattva vehicle, and the outer and inner Tantra vehicles, ending with the Great Completeness—all of these vehicles assert these three phases.

Even the texts of the Great Completeness assert that one is buddhified by completing the five paths of breakthrough and the four phases of appearance in leapover.

Khetsun Sangpo: The texts of the Great Completeness assert that you are buddhified by completing five paths—accumulation, preparation, seeing, meditation, and no more learning—in accordance with those in the Middle Way path and by completing the four phases of appearance in the practice of spontaneous leapover: direct perception of the noumenon, increase of visionary appearances, appearances proceeding to their full extent, and extinction of appearances in the noumenon.

With regard to leapover, in *sūtra* there is leapover meditative stabilization, which is the source of the name “leapover” in Nyingma practice but is completely different from leapover here. The leapover meditative stabilization of the *sūtra* path is a case of bypassing levels of meditative stabilization which usually are only generated serially. Because one is jumping over these levels, this type of meditation is called leapover.

Then, what is leapover in the religious vocabulary of Nyingma? It is associated with spontaneity in the division of

teachings into those concerning essential purity and those concerning spontaneity. Essential purity refers to the view, the equivalent of “view” in other orders of Tibetan Buddhism. Essential purity is a breakthrough, whereas leapover involves spontaneity. Being led upward from the essential purity to spontaneous leapover is one mode of instruction called “that of the view.” The other mode of instruction begins not with the view, the essential purity, but with being introduced to and identifying the factors of spontaneity and then finally ascertaining the view of the emptiness of inherent existence of these spontaneous factors.

It is indeed fantastic what can appear to yourself in this practice. Speaking about this is a violation of secrecy, but nowadays secrecy does not help; this valuable teaching is about to disappear in this world. In the past, these practices were engaged gradually, and these particular topics would not be revealed at all until the person arrived at the proper point. However, at this time there are no persons who proceed in such a gradual manner; thus, if these practices are not explained, they will disappear completely.

In the practice of leapover, the teacher even instructs students in how to look at these appearances with their eyes—askance, up, down, and the like. The teacher will point out what physical condition gives rise to what appearances and will indicate the relationship between spiritual experience and appearances. The lama will explain how to increase the potencies of these appearances through specific meditations.

Students initially see rainbows, drops, suns, moons, various creations. When students are well-based due to the preparatory practices, they see these in a short time. Once they are seen, they are increased, and ultimately you see inconceivable unlimited appearances like looking at a movie. Then, you cultivate these gradually and bring this potency to fulfillment, whereupon they begin to reduce.

In the beginning, it was difficult for them to appear; then the appearances are excessively manifold; then they reduce, and in the end, you meditate until there is just empty sky. Through effort, you bring meditation to the point of one great empty sky, at which time you attain clairvoyance, physical emanations, and so forth.

It is never asserted that Buddhahood is achieved without completing the path in terms of the mode of appearance.

Therefore, when these two are distinguished, the darkness of doubt with respect to topics difficult to realize in any of the vehicles—be they cause

or effect vehicles—is cleared away, whereupon the illumination of ascertainment is generated in an irreversible manner.

Khetsun Sangpo: When you know how to distinguish between the perspective of the noumenon and the perspective of the mode of appearances of phenomena, special comprehension will dawn in your mental continuum, irreversibly illuminating like sunshine to clear away the darkness of doubt and misunderstanding confusing what is the path and what is not the path.

Hence, this differentiation is by all means important.

## 4. Distinguishing between the Great Completeness and the Middle Way

*Statement of opinion:* Though one practiced only the Vajra Vehicle's own path without relating it with the Middle Way, one would not attain liberation.

Khetsun Sangpo: Some people have the wrong idea thinking that even though one entered only the path of the Vajra Vehicle itself without relating it with the view of the Middle Way School, one would not attain liberation and omniscience. That is their wrong idea, and it needs to be analyzed.

*Response:* Let us analyze this. Since in the Vajra Vehicle both the Path of Method and the Path of Release are described, if through realization of the two selflessnesses in the Path of Release one were not released, then it would be the same also with respect to the Middle Way School because these do not differ in import.

Khetsun Sangpo: If one were not released by realizing the two selflessnesses of the Path of Release, it would also be the same for the Middle Way practice: one would not be released through it because the Path of Release and the Middle Way do not differ with respect to the meaning of the two selflessnesses.

*Objection:* Those are [the two selflessnesses] of the Middle Way School.

Khetsun Sangpo: The opponent objects, saying that meaning of the two selflessnesses as set forth in the Path of Release is what is set forth in the Middle Way School.

*Response:* The teaching of the selflessness of persons on the occasion of the Middle Way School is what is taught in the Hearer schools; then, if one does not realize the selflessness of persons, one is not released from cyclic existence, it would similarly be the case that if one did not relate the path of the Middle Way School with the tenets of the Hearer Schools, there would be no liberation even within the path of the Middle Way School.

Khetsun Sangpo: If one does not realize the selflessness of persons, one cannot sever the root of cyclic existence. Therefore, using your reasoning, you must similarly say that without relating the path of the Middle Way School with the tenets of the Hearer

schools there would be no liberation from cyclic existence even in the Middle Way School.

Consequently, go ahead and propound that without first proceeding with the tenets of the Hearer Schools, there is no liberation in the Vajra Vehicle, the higher vehicle!

*Objection:* What is the use of setting forth the selflessness of persons in the path of the Middle Way School! Since even the selflessness of phenomena is extensively taught [in the Middle Way School], there is no need to look into the Hearer [paths].

Khetsun Sangpo: The opponent is thinking: No matter how little the techniques for realizing the selflessness of persons are set forth in the path of the Middle Way School, there is no need to look into those Hearer paths because the Middle Way teachings were taught for the sake of extensively demonstrating the selflessness of phenomena.

*Response:* Then, since in the Vajra Vehicle there is a superior emptiness endowed with all supreme aspects which is qualified by great bliss, what is the use of looking into the Middle Way School!

Moreover, in terms of the Path of Method, the innate pristine wisdom itself that is induced by profound Mantric methods is a special pristine wisdom that by way of method is superior to the non-conceptual pristine wisdom set forth in the Middle Way School. Since that is the case, how could it be that it could not serve as the special insight that is the view of the Middle Way School and could do more than serve as calm abiding?

If a merely more profound technique for achieving calm abiding were the distinctive feature of the Vajra Vehicle and to generate special insight it were necessary to have the assistance of the path of the Middle Way School, then even if it were allowed that the calm abiding of Mantra generates only the [four] concentrations and [four] formless absorptions, then all whatsoever meditative stabilizations of the concentrations and formless absorptions would [absurdly] become speedy paths of the Vajra Vehicle. How could [Mantra] generate some other speedier calm abiding that is not the [four] concentrations and the [four] formless absorptions?

What is the reason why the pristine wisdom—that those definite in the lineage of the Vajra Vehicle induce through the entering, abiding, and dissolving of the winds in the central channel by means of methods described in the Vajra Vehicle—cannot, aside from mere stability of mind, see the suchness of things?



Khetsun Sangpo: The opponent ought to explain how a pristine wisdom induced through the entering, abiding, and dissolving of the karmic winds in the central channel through the techniques of Mantra cannot realize the suchness of things, but simply cannot.

Therefore, it can be ascertained that proponents of such a system have newly fabricated tenets upon injecting their own ideas.

Khetsun Sangpo: Because of such absurdities, we can understand that proponents of such a system, such as Ja-pa Do-ngag, have newly made up a system by inserting their own ideas.

You should not consider it to be anything but that. For, the Kalkī Mañjushrīkīrti,<sup>a</sup> prophesied by the Buddha himself, did not set forth such. He explains that in the *Condensed Kālachakra Tantra* the aspected special great seal—having the nature of a prophetic configuration and endowed with all supreme aspects—is described as a distinctive feature of Mantra, exceeding the emptiness of analyzing the aggregates.

Khetsun Sangpo: When prophetic images appear in a mirror, events and things appear as they actually are. The Secret Mantra great seal of bliss-emptiness greatly exceeds the annihilatory emptiness of Sūtra and the Middle Way analysis of even minute particles.

This is known from the statement [in the *Condensed Kālachakra Tantra*]:<sup>b</sup>

The Buddhas teach the word, “The minute particles of the three existences [the Desire, Form, and Formless Realms] here are non-physical and are just consciousness.

Likewise, consciousness itself does not exist. The Buddha wisdom does not abide anywhere.”

Khetsun Sangpo: When consciousness itself is analyzed, except for only being nominally imputed it does not have a nature of being truly established.

Humans, devoid of the immutable, upon apprehending that emptiness view it as empty.

<sup>a</sup> 'jam dpal grags pa; also called Mañjushrī Narendrakīrti.

<sup>b</sup> dpal dus kyi 'khor lo bsdu pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po'i snying po (śrī-kālacakra-laghu-tantra-rāja-hṛdaya-nāma), in bka' 'gyur (lha sa, 373), TBRC W26071.79:421-478 (Lha sa: Zhol bka' 'gyur par khang, [194-]).

Therefore, the principal deity teaches the blisses of the emissionless innate body in the Vajra Vehicle.

Except for this pristine wisdom of emptiness qualified by great bliss, other Middle Way analysis is not at all needed because it itself is the actual non-conceptual pristine wisdom.

In that way also, there are limitless statements such as [Mañjushrīkīrti's *Brief Explication of the Assertions of Our Own View* which says]:<sup>a</sup>

Emptiness upon analyzing the aggregates  
Is essenceless like a plantain tree trunk.  
Emptiness endowed with all  
Supreme aspects is not that way.

Khetsun Sangpo: Emptiness endowed with all supreme aspects is not essenceless like the trunk of a banana tree, which when peeled away layer by layer, leaves nothing.

Since the thought of Mañjushrī[kīrti] and Vajragarbha—keeper of the secret—and so forth should be in agreement, you can also understand this point through comparison with their scriptures.

There are not any Bodhisattvas who teach in contradiction with the word of Buddha. If there were Bodhisattvas who teach in contradiction with the word of Buddha, then no matter who those teachers are, [their teachings] are fit to be analyzed—it is not proper to rely on their mere speech.

Khetsun Sangpo: Such teachings are fit to be analyzed as to whether they are correct or not; they are not fit to be practiced, no matter who spoke them.

Therefore, the Vajra Vehicle does not have to depend on other paths, such as Sūtra and so forth. Not only that, but also the Vajra Vehicle is an unsurpassed quick path exceeding the paths of Sūtra and so forth.

*Others think:* Even the Middle Way is utterly capable of delineating the mere union of luminosity and emptiness of the mind. Therefore, how could the path of the Great Completeness be a quick path for complete purification in one lifetime?

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<sup>a</sup> Mañjughoṣha Narendrakīrti, *rang gi lta ba'i 'dod pa mdor bstan pa yongs su brtag pa* (*pradarśanānumatoddeśaparīkṣā*), in *bstan 'gyur* (*snar thang*, 3400), TBRC W22704.75:47-107 ([Narthang]: [s.n.], [1800?]); Peking 4610, vol. 81. The Peking catalogue lists the author as Mañjughoṣha Narendrakīrti.

*Reply:* In the Sūtra system there are statements that a matrix-of-One-Gone-to-Bliss primordially endowed with [Buddha] attributes exists—these being made in the manner of making a transition between Sūtra and Mantra—but these say that it is to be realized by faith in dependence upon Buddha's speech and that through understanding such, five faults will be abandoned.<sup>a</sup> Nevertheless, a path for delineating now the nature of the matrix-of-One-Gone-to-Bliss is not explicitly set forth. However, in the path

<sup>a</sup> Maitreya's *Sublime Continuum of the Great Vehicle*, *theg pa chen po rgyud bla ma'i bstan bcos (mahāyānaottaratantraśāstra)*, in *bstan 'gyur (sde dge, 4024)*, TBRC W23703.123:109-148 (Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985) addresses this topic at the end of the first chapter (l.155-167). With Mi-pam-gya-tsho's commentary in brackets, it says:

The ultimate [matrix] of self-arisen [Buddhas, spontaneous and uncompound] Is to be realized through just faith [by common beings, Hearers, Solitary Realizers, and Bodhisattvas who have newly entered their vehicle and is not realized by them just as it is.

For example] the blazing light of the disc of the sun Is not seen by the eyeless.

This [basic constituent of the pure nature] has no [previously existent faults of afflictive emotions] to be removed,

And not the least [factor of good attributes] to be [newly] established.

The reality [which is the mode of abiding devoid of superimposition and deprecation] is to be viewed as reality [by means of the ultimate wisdom].

When [upon developing familiarity with meditative equipoise] reality is seen [just as it is], there is release [from the two obstructions].

The essential constituent is empty of the adventitious [defilements]

Which have the character of being separable [from its entity].

It is not empty of the unsurpassed [attributes of the powers and so forth]

Which have the character of not being separable [from it].

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

Like clouds [which are unstable and lack inherent existence], dreams [which, although experienced, lack inherent existence], and a magician's illusions [which, although appearing, lack inherent existence],

But why has the Victor said here [in the scriptures of the final wheel of doctrine] That the matrix of a Buddha exists [from the start spontaneously in the continuums of] sentient beings?

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

[(1) The fault of] a discouraged mind [and non-enthusiasm for the path, which is to think that enlightenment cannot be achieved; this is due to not knowing that the ultimate basic element exists in oneself, and such discouragement is an obstacle to generating the intention to become enlightened; (2) the fault of non-respect] despising others as lowly, [thinking that these sentient beings are low; this is due to not knowing of its existence in others and is an obstacle to assuming the care of others;

(3) The fault of] incorrect conception [falsely holding that adventitious defilements exist in the basic element whereas from the start they do not; this is due to not knowing of its existence in all others and is an obstacle to the wisdom realizing the true mode of abiding; (4) the fault of] deprecating the true attributes [thinking that good attributes indivisible in entity with the basic element do not exist whereas they do;

And (5) the fault of] excessive attachment to oneself [due to not knowing that the nature of the element of a Superior's attributes is equal in oneself and others, this being an obstacle to realizing oneself and others as equal].

The limit of reality [the naturally pure basic element] is devoid

Of compounded phenomena in all respects.

[The three phenomena of which it is empty—] the afflictive emotions, actions [of non-virtue and so forth], and the fruitions [of those, these being the mental and physical aggregates and so forth—]

Are said to be like clouds and so forth.

The afflictive emotions are said to be similar to clouds [in that they pervade and adventitiously obstruct the basic element of sentient beings].

Contaminated actions [which are motivated by those afflictive emotions] are like objects used in a dream [since they are generated by an erroneous awareness and are objects of a mistaken consciousness].

The [mental and physical] aggregates which are the fruitions of afflictive emotions and [contaminated] actions

Are like a magician's illusions, emanations, [and so forth in that although they appear variously in dependence upon conditions, when analyzed they are not true].

Having made the presentation earlier [in the middle wheel of doctrine that all phenomena, though appearing, are empty of inherent existence],

Again here [on the occasion of teaching] the sublime continuum [the unbroken continuum of the element of attributes],

It was taught [with many variants in verbalization and with many examples and reasons that] "The basic constituent just exists,"

In order that the five faults might be abandoned.

For, not hearing in this way that [the basic constituent exists],

Some—whose minds are discouraged due to the fault

Of deriding oneself [thinking, "How could one such as I attain enlightenment!"]—

Do not generate the intention to become enlightened [in which one thinks, "I will actualize the nature, the ultimate Buddha."]

Some who have generated the intention to become enlightened

Fancy, "I am supreme [a Bodhisattva]."

Whereby they discriminate [others] who have not generated

The intention to become enlightened as lower [than themselves].

In those who think thus [that the Buddha-essence does not exist],

Knowledge of reality [the mode of abiding free from superimposition and deprecation] is not generated.

Thereby, they hold [a view superimposing] the unreal

And not knowing the meaning of reality, [deprecate it].

of Mantra in general, once [your continuum] is ripened through initiation, there are quintessential instructions by a lama for how to cultivate yogas, such as methods of self-blessing, and so on, and for introducing and identifying intrinsic awareness—pristine wisdom—in direct transmission.

Khetsun Sangpo: In Mantra a lama introduces a student to the inconceivable noumenon—intrinsic awareness of the nature—in direct, or naked, transmission through very clear quintessential instructions without anything hidden.

Therefore, how could the speed of those two paths be similar?

Khetsun Sangpo: In dependence upon having such quintessential instructions Mantra has an unsurpassably quick path. Thus, how could a slow Sūtra path that takes a long time be its equal?

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Because of being fabricated [by conditions] and being adventitious,  
The faults [that is, the afflictive emotions and so forth] of sentient beings do not  
[exist as their own] reality.

In reality those faults are selfless

[And thus the basic constituent has from the start] a pure nature of good attributes.

[The Bodhisattva] who possesses an attitude of holding unreal faults [as the reason  
for viewing that the basic constituent does not exist]

And who deprecates the true attributes [of the powers and so forth]

Does not attain the [great] love seeing

Oneself and sentient beings as equal.

From hearing in this way [that the naturally pure realm exists without difference  
in all],

One generates enthusiasm [for the path upon seeing that Buddhahood can be  
achieved], respect [for other sentient beings that values them even] like the  
Teacher [Buddha],

Wisdom [knowing that the conventional defilements do not inherently exist], pristine wisdom [realizing the entity of the basic constituent in which the basic element and intrinsic awareness are indivisible], and great love [which is the equality of oneself and others].

Due to generating those five [beneficial] phenomena [in the mental continuum],

There is no unseemliness [because of being free from discouragement of mind and  
so forth; one views] self and other as equal [without low and high;

One knows the fact that the adventitious defilements of] faults do not exist [by  
way of their own nature] and that good attributes are [naturally] possessed;

[And one attains great] love which is the equality of oneself and sentient beings  
[as having the matrix of a Buddha].

From [those five] Buddhahood is quickly attained.

For a translation of these stanzas with Döl-po-pa Shay-rab-gyal-tshan's commentary in brackets, see Jeffrey Hopkins, *Mountain Doctrine: Tibet's Fundamental Treatise on Other-Emptiness and the Buddha Matrix* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion Publications, 2006), 108-113.

In particular, does the Middle Way have such naked dawning of intrinsically aware and empty fundamental pristine wisdom—spontaneous establishment of the Three [Buddha] Bodies without relying on methods such as binding the winds and so forth—that is in the natural path (*rang lam*) of the clear light Great Completeness?

If such does exist in the Middle Way, then they are similar. If not, their speed is not similar. When the Middle Way delineates the sphere of reality [that is to say, emptiness], the sphere devoid of dualistic and conceptual proliferation is called “the sphere of reality.”

Khetsun Sangpo: When the Middle Way delineates emptiness, it calls this voidness of all proliferations—the four extremes of production from self, other, both and neither and the eight extremes of cessation, production, annihilation, permanence, coming, going, difference, and sameness and so forth—“the sphere of reality.”

Nevertheless, the meaning of voidness of proliferations is manifested on the path of seeing through the force of familiarizing with the two collections [of merit and wisdom], and that path of seeing, moreover, is attained even by those of sharp faculties through accumulating [the collections] and purifying [obstructions] over one period of countless eons; it is not said that the path of seeing is attained faster than this. In Mantra, however, through the force of [your continuum] being ripened by initiation and through the force of introduction [to perception of the noumenon], you right now are manifestly introduced to metaphoric pristine wisdom. In dependence upon this, you can, in not too long, actualize actual pristine wisdom. Therefore, how could the speed of those two [the Middle Way and the Great Completeness] be similar! Did not yogis, like Indrabuti [King of Oddiyana], say that there also is a simultaneous path?

Moreover, in the father tantras and mother tantras within Mantra, through the power of dissolving the winds in the central channel, a metaphoric pristine wisdom of a path that, involving exertion, actualizes pristine wisdom is induced whereupon, in dependence upon it, there are cases of manifesting actual pristine wisdom in this lifetime. In Sūtra there are no such methods.

Furthermore, the metaphoric and actual pristine wisdoms that are to be manifested are one’s own intrinsic mind, the factuality of fundamental clear light. Consider whether there are such techniques for delineating and being introduced to the mind of clear light in the Middle Way!

With respect to how the fundamental mind of clear light dawns as the Complete Enjoyment Body and Emanation Bodies, during individual

withdrawal there are ten signs of appearing clear light (*snang ba'i 'od gsal*).

Khetsun Sangpo: The noumenal fundamental mind of clear light is the Body of Attributes of a Buddha, and it is that from which the Complete Enjoyment Body and the Emanation Bodies dawn. In the Kālachakra system, the completion-stage is in six phases called “branches”—individual withdrawal (*sor sdud, pratyāhara*), concentration (*bsam gtan, dhyāna*), stopping-vitality (*srog rtsol, prāṇāyāma*), retention (*'dzin pa, dhāraṇā*), subsequent mindfulness (*rjes dran, anusmṛti*), and meditative stabilization (*ting nge 'dzin, samādhi*). On the level of individual withdrawal, there are ten internal signs of the beginning of the appearance of the clear light; these are rainbow-like empty-forms that appear to the mind—smoke, mirage, fireflies, butter-lamp flame, blazing fire at the end of time (*dus med, kālāgni*), moon, sun, black *rāhu*, lightning, and blue drop. Called “appearances of the nonexistent”—they are on a level of appearance much like pictures, unlike later when there is an appearance of pristine wisdom itself in which a deity appears with the full magnificence of knowledge, empathy, and power, like meeting with an actual deity who can confer blessings and so forth.

These means of manifesting fundamental basic mind, means of manifesting a body of attributes of a Buddha, are partially concordant with the thought—of those [Bodhisattvas] who are on pure grounds—of the equality of cyclic existence and peace,<sup>a</sup> and these means of manifesting Form Bodies that are appearances that are signs of the clear light (*rtags snang*)

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<sup>a</sup> In chapter four of Maitreya's *Ornament for the Clear Realizations*, *mngon rtogs rgyan* (*abhisamayālamkāra*), in *bstan 'gyur* (*sde dge*, 3786), TBRC W23703.80:3-28 (Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae Choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985) this is the ninth of eleven topics characterizing complete training in all aspects, called “training in the equality of cyclic existence and peace” (*srid zhi mnyam nyid kyi sbyor ba, bhavaśāntisamatābhāvanāprayoga*). It occurs only on the three pure Bodhisattva grounds—the eighth, ninth, and tenth grounds. The training in the equality of mundane existence and peace is the viewing of cyclic existence and nirvāṇa as equal in the sense that just as there is no manifest apprehension of true existence during meditative equipoise, so is there none outside of meditative equipoise. See Jeffrey Hopkins and Jongbok Yi, *The Hidden Teaching of the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras: Jam-yang-shay-pa's Seventy Topics and Kōnchog-jig-may-wang-po's 173 Topics* (UMA Institute for Tibetan Studies, uma-tibet.org, 2014), 39<sup>th</sup> Topic.

are partially concordant with the practice of training in pure lands<sup>a</sup> by those who are on pure grounds. Such a capacity to take the natures of any of the two bodies as the path *right now* is not set forth in the Middle Way. Since [the Middle Way] does not meditate this way, why is Mantra not a quicker path? It is.

With respect to this intrinsically aware and empty fundamental pristine wisdom, the body of attributes, [in the Great Completeness] it is not necessary [as it is in the Guhyasamāja system and so forth] to rely on methods involving constructs (*mtshan bcas*) for stopping the winds in the central channel and so forth.

Khetsun Sangpo: In Highest Yoga Tantra there are quintessential instructions for causing the winds to enter, abide, and dissolve in the central channel in order to manifest deeper levels of consciousness, but such techniques are not required in the Great Completeness.

Rather, through conferral of initiation transmitting the lama's magnificent blessings and through the path of the Great Completeness itself, you are introduced to and identify intrinsic mind as the body of attributes, whereby you manifest the perspective of essential purity, the birthlessness of your own mind.

Khetsun Sangpo: In the tradition of the Great Completeness a lama can transmit realizations at the time of conferring initiation, and also by means of its own path you can be introduced to and actualize intrinsic mind, its essential purity, its noumenal birthlessness. Thus, the tradition of the Great Completeness has features of inconceivable speed.

Since this is undeniable, such pristine wisdom is the actual pristine wisdom being characterized in the fourth initiation.

Khetsun Sangpo: The fourth initiation is the precious word initiation; pristine wisdom is the meaning that is verbally characterized, or made manifest, during the initiation.

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<sup>a</sup> In chapter four of Maitreya's *Ornament for Clear Realization* this is the tenth of eleven topics characterizing complete training in all aspects, called trainings in a pure land (*zhing dag sbyor ba, buddhakṣetrapariśuddhiprayoga*). It occurs only on the three pure Bodhisattva grounds—the eighth, ninth, and tenth grounds. It is comprised by the prayer-wishes and so forth that establish the special land where one is to be fully enlightened. See Jeffrey Hopkins and Jongbok Yi, *The Hidden Teaching of the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras: Jamyang-shay-pa's Seventy Topics and Kōn-chog-jig-may-wang-po's 173 Topics* (UMA Institute for Tibetan Studies, uma-tibet.org, 2014), 40<sup>th</sup> Topic.



Also, with respect to the clear light that dawns upon the purification of karmic winds in the central channel

Khetsun Sangpo: Through quintessential instructions in the Highest Yoga Mantra systems of Guhyasamāja and so forth the winds are caused to enter, abide, and dissolve in the central channel, whereby karmic winds are purified, and the clear light dawns.

and with respect to the innate great bliss that is induced upon having induced the four joys through melting bliss,

Khetsun Sangpo: The inner heat, called the “Fierce Female” (*gtum mo*), blazes from meditating on a short “a” [a vertical line in Sanskrit], red in color, imagined four finger-widths below the navel in the central channel. This blazing heat gradually rises in the central channel to the crown of the head at the same height as the middle of the forehead, where there is an upside down syllable *ham*, white in color. The heat touches the syllable *ham*, which gradually melts like butter, flowing down the central channel. When it reaches the neck center in the central channel you experience joy; when it reaches the heart center, you experience special joy; when it reaches the navel center, you experience supreme joy; and when it reaches the tip of the sexual organ whether male or female, you experience irreversible innate joy. This is called inducing the four joys through melting the syllable *ham* at the crown of the head by the fire of the Fierce Female. Those four joys can each be divided in four ways, making sixteen joys.

there is not in the least any “great bliss” or “clear light” exceeding naked perception of the factual entity, the mode of abiding of intrinsically aware and empty fundamental pristine wisdom [in the Great Completeness].

Khetsun Sangpo: In the systems of Highest Yoga Mantra such as Guhyasamāja and Kālachakra, the clear light dawns upon purifying the winds in the central channel, and innate great bliss is elicited upon inducing the four joys through melting bliss. This is bliss-emptiness, bliss and great emptiness. Nevertheless, in the Great Completeness there is an even faster way. When you are introduced to and identify intrinsic awareness and emptiness, this is utter consummation in that you identify your own face, your own entity, as being the body of attributes—empty, pervasive pristine wisdom of great bliss—intrinsic awareness and emptiness. There is no view, no method—such as inducing great bliss by the four joys—that exceeds this ability to nakedly perceive the entity

of ultimate meaning, intrinsic mind. It is like advancing one vehicle beyond Highest Yoga Mantra.

The clear light is self-luminous pristine wisdom devoid of all conceptuality, like sky into which all clouds have dissolved.

Khetsun Sangpo: Mi-pam-gya-tsho says *all* conceptuality because we have inconceivable varieties of conceptualization—of the good, of the bad, and on and on. The final place of immaculate emptiness free from all these is the self-effulgent or self-luminous clarity of pristine wisdom.

When you realize the perspective of essential purity—the birthlessness of your own mind—no conceptual proliferations abide in or pollute its entity.

Khetsun Sangpo: When the birthless noumenon of essential purity of this mistaken mind—the finality of perspectives of the Great Completeness—is realized, our proliferative conceptions distinguishing good and bad find it impossible to dwell in its entity. They cannot, like a contagion, pollute it.

Within it whatever conceptuality dawns is self-releasing, and it does not become anything other than being within essential purity.

Khetsun Sangpo: The foundation of release in the Great Completeness starts in actuality with “self-appearing and self-releasing” (*rang shar rang grol*). Long-chen-pa explains in the *Treasury of the Sphere of Reality* that this is like the thief of conceptuality entering inside the empty house of one’s body, where the spy of mindfulness and introspection remains watchful. Within not forgetting but mindfully maintaining the continuum of the noumenon, then when conceptions dawn, due to continually sustaining mindfulness and introspection you notice, “A conception has dawned and now is released. A conception has dawned and now is released.” Mindfulness and introspection recognize all whatsoever robber-like thoughts, but do not get involved in any speculations; it just lets them appear and lets them release themselves. When you abide in the noumenal clear light, all conceptualization is self-releasing.

You have to remain without losing the continuum of your own face, your own nature, through mindfulness and introspection. The robber—conceptuality—figures there must be something wonderful in the beautiful house of the body, but finding that it is empty with nothing to take, the robber leaves of his own accord.

In this way, when thoughts of good, bad, and the like dawn in your mental continuum, they should be treated like robbers in an empty house. If you remain within undistracted mindfulness and introspection, those conceptions are not empowered and thus do not have to be eliminated—they themselves take off.

This is indispensable advice for the practice of the Great Completeness. For example, in practicing Tsong-kha-pa's *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path* it is indispensable for developing understanding of the view of emptiness to perform analytical meditation and stabilizing meditation, which are the foundation of release. Similarly, when sustaining the face of the noumenal mode of abiding in the Great Completeness the foundation of release—the most important factor without which you cannot reach the final quintessential instruction—is “self-appearing and self-releasing.” Through mindfulness and introspection you sustain without distraction the continuum of the noumenon to which you have been introduced by a lama, and within this you do not stop whatever conceptions dawn but let them appear without coming under their influence, staying in taut alertness.

How do thoughts release themselves? Like a snake that has been tied in many knots and then left alone. The snake unties itself of its own accord. This is self-release. No matter how many conceptions are produced, because you are maintaining the continuum of mindfulness and introspection without deterioration, they release themselves and disappear. The nature of mindfulness and introspection being noumenal clear light, when conceptuality is allowed to appear and release itself, its fluctuations cannot inflict their harm, whereby the clear light that exists inside ignites greater and greater.

Hence, this is the great clear light.

Also, with respect to bliss, blisses experiencing mutable bliss are only supports of the path; they are not great bliss because they are impermanent.

Khetsun Sangpo: There are two ways in which mutable blisses are induced. For those who have vows of chastity, there is a technique using their own bodies, which involves a substitute for a consort. A yogi trains in concentrating on the mutable bliss that ignites through using it.

Those who do not have vows of chastity can utilize a consort's body. Preferably, the consort will have received Highest Yoga Tantra initiations many times and have gained a full complement

of spiritual learning and experience. Then, in dependence upon experiencing the bliss of male-female union, if the yogi and consort are well trained in controlling the inner winds, when the fluid comes down from the syllable *ham* at the top of the head such that it seems that it would be emitted from the sexual organ, they can pull it back up. During the downwards flow of the fluid, they experience the four joys of the forward process, and then through the upwards flow of the fluid back to the top of the head they experience the four joys of the reverse process.

Even if these joys are experienced for a lengthy period, they are mutable—afterwards they vanish. They obviously are not permanently abiding bliss, but are foundations for getting at immutable noumenal bliss through training in the dynamics (*rtsal*) of bliss. These are blisses on the occasion of the path, which, although they are not immutable great bliss and thus are impermanent, are inconceivably joyous, serving as foundations of the path.

Indrabodhi says:

Great bliss is not impermanent  
Great bliss is permanently permanent.

Khetsun Sangpo: There were three Indrabodhis who appeared in the Palace of Lady Sky-Travelers in Uddiyana. When Shākyamuni Buddha travelled by miraculous powers to the western land of Uddiyana and set forth the *Glorious Guhyasamāja Tantra*, the first Indrabodhi gained instantaneous enlightenment. Not a gradualist, he had simultaneous realization and release when Shākyamuni Buddha, having risen up as Guhyasamāja, conferred initiation on him.

The story is that King Indrabodhi was on the roof of his palace enjoying a sunny morning. He was looking into the sky when Shākyamuni Buddha was flying into the area with many Hearers through their magical powers. Indrabodhi wondered out loud, “What are those many yellow birds up in the sky?” One of his ministers replied, “Those are not birds; they are probably Hearers from Magadha capable at magic who are followers of Shākyamuni Buddha, the son of King Shuddhodana, who became fully enlightened. Having gained miraculous powers, they are traveling in the sky.”

Intrigued, Indrabodhi asked who might know about them and was told of a group of merchants from Magadha, whom he called

to him. They explained that indeed these were not birds but Hearers with magical powers, able to fly in the sky. King Indrabodhi felt that he must meet the Buddha and inquired how he could so. "That is easy. Clean your palace well and make supplication to them to come for the noon meal." The king was pleased and asked for their help; he had the palace cleaned from top to bottom and had a great noon meal—the Buddha and his retinue eating only at noon—prepared in accordance with their advice.

In response to the King's supplication, great Hearers such as Kāshyapa, Maudgalyāyana, and Shāriputra arrived together with their individual retinues numbering even five hundred or a thousand, flying to the roof floor of King Indrabodhi's palace. The King thought that Shākyamuni Buddha must be one of them, but the merchants explained that these were the Elders among Shākyamuni Buddha's followers—Kāshyapa with extraordinary learning, Maudgalyāyana with extraordinary magical powers, and Shāriputra with extraordinary intelligence. In time, Shākyamuni Buddha arrived, the merchants identifying him as our Teacher, the son of King Shuddhodana, who left the householder's life and became fully enlightened.

The King offered the food and then made a supplication, "Please teach me the path to complete perfect enlightenment." Shākyamuni Buddha answered, "If you leave the householder's life, there is a method through which you could achieve enlightenment in this lifetime." The King responded, "I cannot leave the householder's life. Please give me a technique for achieving Buddhahood without having to abandon any of the pleasures of the senses."

The Buddha, thinking that the King was likely a vessel for Secret Mantra, instantaneously transformed from the attire of a monastic into the personal deity Guhyasamāja. Instantaneously also, the entire retinue of Hearers transformed into the full collection of deities of the Guhyasamāja maṇḍala.

Before the King sat down to be conferred the Guhyasamāja initiation, he was an ordinary being, but when he rose from the ritual, he had been instantaneously released, capable of magical display like the Hearers. This is why he is referred to as "Indrabodhi of simultaneous realization and release." In the very instant when he was introduced to the noumenon, he was naturally awakened with the full powers of magical emanation. He is the only Indian who achieved such sudden enlightenment; we, on the

other hand, are gradualists, who receive initiation and step by step advance in realization.

That is the first Indrabodhi. The middle one was the wealthy but blind King Jah of Uddiyana. As a way to gain eyesight, he gave away his entire kingdom in charity to the point where even his Palace of Lady Sky-Travelers was laid bare. Because there still were beggars in his kingdom, he decided to search for a wish-granting jewel in the ocean with the idea that by making a wish to it he could fulfill the needs of the poor, and so he engaged a captain and his ship. Indeed, through the help of the captain he discovered a wish-granting jewel and brought it back. On the way, they stopped at an island where Padmasambhava was born atop a thousand petaled lotus in a lake, where Lady Sky-Travelers were paying obeisance and making offerings.

Not seeing this wondrous sight, the King wondered what was going on and, making a request to the wish-granting jewel, gained his sight. Seeing Padmasambhava born atop the lotus, he told his minister Dring-nge-dzin to find out about this. The minister approached Padmasambhava to make inquiry. Padmasambhava responded, "Without depending upon a father and mother as a means of birth, I appeared as an emanation of the Buddha Amitābha from a lotus stalk for the sake of sentient beings."

The King was extremely pleased, and making a request to the wish-granting jewel a royal throne appeared. Since he did not have a son, he made a further request that all the necessities for inviting Padmasambhava to serve as his son be spontaneously established. He sent the minister Dring-nge-dzin to invite Padmasambhava, who accepted to serve as a substitute for his son.

After a period of time while King Indrabodhi and Queen Öñjan-ma reigned, when the crown prince Padmasambhava was playing war games, he accidentally killed a minister's son who actually was an emanation of a demon. Since Padmasambhava had broken the law, he had to be punished. The council of ministers wanted to put him to death, but the King chose to have him banished. There is much more to this beautiful story of the middle King Indrabodhi, but I will leave it there.

Kambalapāda, Lawapa: The incomparable story teller Taranaṭha relates the legends of Lawapa in his *bKa' 'bab bdun ldan* [translated by David Templeman as *The Seven Instruction Line-ages*]. Dudjom Rimpoche relates three of them and most likely they used a common source.

The final Indrabodhi was the great adept Kambalapāda from the very same Uddiyana. He used to sleep at the gate of the King's palace and in the morning went about begging for the noon meal. He wore only a woolen blanket, which one evening at dusk he left behind while he himself emanated as various animals and birds. The Queen and a hundred or so of the King's retinue, who were mainly beings born from a mixture of humans and demonic gods, did not recognize the yogi and decided to cut his blanket into a hundred pieces and eat it.

The next day, when the King emerged from his palace, he saw the naked yogi and was amazed at this shameless nude display where women could see him. Deciding to punish the yogi, he ordered guards to seize him. Captured, Kambalapāda was brought before the King, but he declared, "You should punish not me but your women." "Why?" the King retorted. "I, a yogi, have no more than a blanket to wear, but your women ate it. So, if you are going to punish anyone, it should be them."

Hearing this, the King called for his Queen and harem, but they would not admit to what they had done. The King responded, "If you do not admit to it, I will finish off the yogi," whereupon they were frightened and each coughed up the piece she had eaten. When the pieces were arranged together, they were still not complete, at which point the Queen coughed up the final piece, completing the count. The King apologized and had the pieces sewn together. That is a little of the story of the final of the three Indrabodhis who appeared in the Palace of Lady Sky-Travelers in Uddiyana.

The first Indrabodhi explained that when the unchangeable clear light great bliss of the Great Completeness is attained, there is nothing impermanent about it, unlike the four joys which, when you induce them, they are present, and when that is finished, they disappear. Rather, because you have attained the great bliss of the immutable great bliss, this bliss and joy can remain, just as it is, at all times without interruption. Though the bliss of the path is immutable, the bliss of the final fruit is not at all changeable, not impermanent. Hence, he says that it is permanently permanent.

Therefore, it is not mutable blissful feeling (*tshor bde 'gyur ba can*). The nature of undifferentiable essential purity and spontaneity—entity of self-cognition of all phenomena—is devoid of all the aches of mutability, but pristine wisdom, the entity of which is immutable, is not affected by any of the contaminated blisses and pains of cyclic existence. In it, aside from

all whatsoever appearances dawning as entities of bliss, aches and so forth are primordially absent. Hence, it is without conjunction with or disjunction from great bliss.

Khetsun Sangpo: Since the entity of the inconceivable immutable noumenal bliss is pristine wisdom of the final fruit, it is not affected, is not polluted, by any of the contaminated pleasures or pains of cyclic existence or of the path. Whatever appears dawns as entities of bliss, and aside from this there are primordially no pangs, not even a speck of suffering or the like. Therefore, this basic entity of pristine wisdom does not come together with great bliss, and it does not separate from great bliss—at all times it is just bliss.

Therefore, if Mantra [systems] involving constructs—paths of method—are superior to Sūtra, they are paths seeking the exemplified [or actual] pristine wisdom by way of the example [or metaphoric] pristine wisdom. Why would the path of the Great Completeness—in which just that exemplified pristine wisdom itself, which is what is being characterized [or made known] by this [example pristine wisdom], dawns *directly*—not be a faster path! For, when you familiarize to being within it, whatever appears dawns as the sport of the Three Bodies, due to which it is possible to become buddhafied in this lifetime.

Khetsun Sangpo: Mantra systems are of two varieties—regular ones with constructs and the extraordinary without constructs. Ordinary Mantra systems involving constructs, such as the Highest Yoga Mantra systems of Guhyasamaja and so forth that rely on practices of method for inducing the joys and the dawning of clear light and great bliss, and so forth, are superior to Sūtra paths. This is because they are initial paths seeking actual pristine wisdom by way of metaphoric pristine wisdom. Given this, the path of the extraordinary Great Completeness without constructs, in which just that actual pristine wisdom—that is being suggested by lower levels of wisdom—dawns directly and instantaneously, is a faster path. How could this possibly not be an extraordinary, faster path!

For, when you familiarize from within the view of the Great Completeness, whatever appears in visual sight appears as exalted bodies, emanation bodies; all reverberations, all sounds, appear as exalted speech, the complete enjoyment body; and all thoughts and reflections dawn as exalted mind, the body of attributes,



whereby in this lifetime itself it is possible to become fully enlightened as a Buddha.

Therefore, since the body of attributes, the perspective of essential purity, is manifestly seen through [the process of] breakthrough, and since form bodies, the perspective of spontaneity, are manifestly seen through [the process of] leapover, such a vehicle taking direct perception of Buddhahood as the path does not exist in the Sūtra path.

Khetsun Sangpo: Through the path of the Great Completeness you manifestly encounter the face of Buddhahood—the body of attributes and the complete enjoyment body—while still on the path. How could such a path exist in Sūtra! If these features of breakthrough and spontaneity do not exist even in other paths of Highest Yoga Tantra or in the Great Seal, they could not exist in the Sūtra path.

Due to this, Sūtra has a path in which, having delineated emptiness through inference, practice is performed in connection with great vast collections [of merit and wisdom], whereby perception of the noumenal truth is gradually approached, but Sūtra does not teach a method engendering the conviction of direct perception from the level of a beginner. In the Great Completeness] through meditating on the mode of abiding of the two bodies—the body of attributes and form bodies—in accordance with how you gain conviction even from the level of a beginner, actual pristine wisdom is quickly induced. Since this metaphoric pristine wisdom is able to portray actual pristine wisdom, like the form of the moon in water, it is superior to Sūtra.

When you directly see the exemplified pristine wisdom, like the moon, you see the actual exemplified pristine wisdom, but just as although the moon of the first day of the month is the actual moon, still there is greater perception of it up through the fifteenth day of the month, so on the path of meditation perception of the exemplified pristine wisdom increases greater and greater. The achievement of Buddhahood—complete perception like the final vision of the moon on the fifteenth day—can be accomplished by those of best faculties having great effort in one short lifetime of this degenerate era, and even if that does not happen, the supreme state [of Buddhahood] is achieved in the intermediate state and so forth. How could such a path exist in Sūtra?

Khetsun Sangpo: There are two levels of pristine wisdom: One is metaphoric pristine wisdom, and the other is actual pristine wis-

dom. The metaphoric, or example, pristine wisdom is able to exemplify—characterize or portray for you—the actual pristine wisdom. Metaphoric pristine wisdom is compared to seeing a reflection of the moon in water which can characterize for you what the moon is like, whereas the actual pristine wisdom is compared to directly seeing the moon.

When you directly see actual pristine wisdom, you indeed see the actual pristine wisdom, but just as around the third day of the month you can see the moon, and you have to say that you are seeing the actual moon though not the whole thing, but you see a greater extent of it right up to the fifteenth day of the month—so it is with perception of the reality introduced to you by the lama. On the path of meditation, which is the time of familiarization with primordial reality that has already been seen, your perception of the actual pristine wisdom increases greater and greater. Then, at the completion of this increase, just as on the fifteenth day of the month you see the full orb of the moon, so when all of the spontaneously established attributes of a Buddha are seen, you achieve Buddhahood, the state of complete perception.

There are three levels of practitioners: Those of best, middling, and low faculties. Those of best faculties, with intense effort, can achieve Buddhahood in one short lifetime of this degenerate era, whereas those of middling faculties achieve Buddhahood in the intermediate state when body and mind separate and the complete enjoyment body is attained. How could those levels of paths exist in Sūtra! Those of low faculties achieve it over the course of lifetimes.

In particular, through perceiving the meaning of the Great Completeness—fundamental intrinsic awareness and emptiness—the appearances of this lifetime vanish whereby when the basal clear light dawns, you are released. Also, for one who presently familiarizes with the appearances of the leapover process, in the intermediate state during which you do not have a material body [composed of flesh, blood, bone, and so forth], self-appearing appearances of light—lights, drops, divine bodies, mounds of offerings, and so forth—are recognized as self-appearances, whereupon you are released.

Khatsun Sangpo: You recognize them as “self-appearances”—appearances of the noumenon, appearances of fundamental mind. In the mode of instruction of the Great Completeness, as long as you

cannot distinguish between self-appearances and other-appearances, you are confused about all mental events. Through this yoga, however, you come to be able to perceive, to comprehend, your own noumenon; thus, when these lights, drops, divine bodies, maṇḍala offerings, and so forth appear, you recognize all of them as self-appearances of your own noumenon, at which point there is release.

Does the Sūtra system have such?

Through perceiving the meaning of fundamental intrinsic awareness and emptiness,

Khetsun Sangpo: In the Great Completeness we speak of the noumenon as intrinsically aware and empty. In the systems of the Great Exposition School and the Sūtra School, awareness (*blo*), knowing (*rig pa*), and cognition (*shes pa*) are said to be synonymous, this being from the viewpoint of identifying these as just the factor of luminosity and knowing (*gsal zhing rig pa*). Here in the Great Completeness of Secret Mantra, the term “intrinsic awareness” (*rig pa*) also indeed similarly has the sense of luminosity and knowing, but in particular it is intrinsic awareness and emptiness. Very different from the awareness, knowing, and cognition that are identified as synonymous in those systems, it is what, when known, you are a Buddha, and when unknown, you are in cyclic existence. Knowledge of it—unchangeable fundamental reality—is the dividing line.

all bodies and appearances dawn as maṇḍalas of divine bodies; speech and winds dawn as vajra speech; thoughts and conceptions dawn as the nature of exalted mind.

Khetsun Sangpo: Through receiving these quintessential instructions on:

- all bodies and all external material appearances of objects dawning as divine bodies and inestimable mansions in maṇḍalas
- all winds and speech dawning as a Buddha’s vajra speech
- all thoughts whatsoever dawning as vajra mind not passing beyond just the nature of Buddha-mind as the sport of pristine wisdom

you are able to maintain a state concordant with all of the vows and pledges of Mantra.

Thus, without relying on methods for causing the winds to enter, remain, and dissolve in the central channel,

Khetsun Sangpo: These are the techniques set forth in the general system of Highest Yoga Mantra to manifest the mind of clear light.

you are able—through perceiving the fundamental pristine wisdom of intrinsic awareness and emptiness—to take as the path the factuality of the four vajras and the four exalted bodies in direct perception of release. Does the Middle Way have such?

All of the essentials of the Vajra Vehicle are contained in the path of general Highest Yoga Mantra in:

- the generation-stage
- binding the winds
- bliss of the melting of the essential drops
- meditating the innate

as the means of purifying the defilements of the four states upon ripening the continuum through the four initiations.

Khetsun Sangpo: The process of the path in general Highest Yoga Mantra, which is exceeded by the Great Completeness, is to ripen your unripened continuum through the four initiations—vase, secret, pristine wisdom, and precious word initiations. Then, the mental continuum is purified of the defilements of the four states—waking state, dream state, deep sleep state, and the fourth state, which is that of ordinary sexual union. When you are not able to purify the defilements of these four states, you are subject to their influence, the worst being the defilements of the fourth state.

The techniques for purifying these four are the generation-stage, binding of the winds, the bliss resulting from melting drops of essential fluid, and meditation of the innate. First, in the generation-stage of method, you generate, or imagine, yourself as your own favored deity in order to purify the ordinary appearance of your body and the conception of your body as ordinary. Then, having imagined your body to be a divine body, there is the practice of restraining the capacities of ordinary speech by binding the karmic winds of cyclic existence on which our mistaken minds ride, due to which we accumulate various good and bad karmas. Since the mind is presently under the control of karmic winds, you

utilize techniques to stop karmic winds and techniques to allow the winds of pristine wisdom to become manifest. Then, through igniting the inner heat called the “fierce female” (*gtum mo*) the upside-down letter *ham* at the top of the head melts, and through the passage of these drops down through the central channel, the four joys are experienced, at the end of which innate pristine wisdom, the nature, is meditated.

These are, without any striving, complete in the path of the Great Completeness in the manner of these attributes being possessed on this higher level. Therefore, the Great Completeness is the peak of quick paths, and such is not set forth in the causal Perfection Vehicle.

Khetsun Sangpo: The Great Completeness does not require the strong exertion required on other paths to become completely purified. It is the most profound and quick path. There is no need to mention that the paths of Hearers and Solitary Realizers are lower, since they are stuck in seeking the extreme of peace in a low level of nirvāṇa. With regard to the Sūtra system within the Great Vehicle, at the quickest those of sharpest faculties take three periods of countless eons to accumulate the collections of merit and wisdom and to purify obstructions; for those of middling faculties, it takes ten periods of countless eons; and for those of low faculties, it takes thirty-two periods of countless eons. However, through the path of the Great Completeness you can in one life and one body achieve the state of union of Vajradhara with great exertion; hence, this is the peak of quick paths. Not even the vocabulary of such a speedy path is set forth in the causal Perfection Vehicle, no matter how profound the vehicle of the six perfections is.



## 5. Distinguishing between the Path of Method and the Great Completeness Path of Release

*Someone thinks:* This purification of predispositions for the fluctuations of the three appearances is a distinctive feature of the Mantra path, and because it does not exist in the Sūtra system, one progresses over the ten Bodhisattva grounds of the Sūtra path, eventually entering into the Mantra Vehicle and becoming buddhified. Therefore, many holy beings speak of progressing higher and higher over thirteen grounds.

Khetsun Sangpo: This person is reflecting on the facts that:

- We have predispositions for moving through the three appearances—for the awakening of the vivid white appearance, and that ceasing; then the awakening of the vivid red or orange increase of appearance, and that ceasing; then the awakening of the vivid black appearance called “near-attainment” and that ceasing—followed by the dawning of the clear light.
- The Mantra path has practices for purifying these predispositions, which do not exist in the Sūtra system, and thus these practices are a distinctive feature of Mantra, making it faster.
- Since the Sūtra path does not have such a feature, in Sūtra one progresses over the five paths and the ten Bodhisattva grounds and then eventually enters the Mantra Vehicle in order to become fully purified as a Buddha.

The person’s mistake comes in misreading the references to thirteen grounds by many holy beings, the wrong idea being to conclude that there are two grounds above the eleventh ground of Complete Light (*kun tu ’od*) that comprise a separate vehicle.

*Response:* Both Rong-zom-chö-kyi-sang-po (*rong zom chos kyi bzang po*, eleventh century) and Long-chen-rab-jam asserted that the eleventh ground of the sūtra path is the fully qualified Buddha ground and asserted that [the grounds of] lotus of non-attachment (*ma chags padma*) and great collection of wheels of letters (*yi ge ’khor lo tshogs chen*) are conceptual divisions in terms of the three bodies.

Khetsun Sangpo: Mi-pam-gya-tsho responds by pointing out that two great persons of the Nyingma lineage, the great pandit Rong-zom-chö-kyi-sang-po and the Victor Long-chen-rab-jam, asserted that despite mentions in some texts of thirteen grounds (and even

of sixteen grounds in other texts), the eleventh ground of complete light in Sūtra and the thirteenth ground of Vajradhara in Mantra, which is also called “great collection of wheels of letters,” are the same in being the ground of Buddhahood—actual fully qualified Buddhahood. How do those two great beings explain these two extra grounds beyond the eleventh? They take the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth grounds as merely conceptually designated divisions by way of the three Buddha bodies, associating the eleventh ground with the body of attributes, the twelfth ground with the complete enjoyment body, and the thirteenth ground with emanation bodies. The eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth grounds are all Buddhahood.

The fluctuations of the three subtle appearances are as follows: That which creates fluctuation even from the basal sphere of reality is fluctuation by the winds of pristine wisdom, and when sentient beings dawn from basal appearances, they arise from those three appearances in which intrinsic mind is associated with the winds and refined essential drops. Therefore, when these [three appearances] are stopped through the Path of Method, a body of unfluctuating pristine wisdom is achieved.

Khetsun Sangpo: Karmic winds cannot bring about fluctuation in the mode of abiding of the basal sphere of reality; rather, prior to the dawning of basal appearances, there is fluctuation from the basal sphere of reality by way of fluctuations in the winds of pristine wisdom. In terms easy to understand: An ocean is totally waveless due to a lack of any sort of breeze, and then due to the presence of breezes is stirred into waves; similarly, basal appearances come about through fluctuations in the ocean of the basal sphere of reality, brought about by, not karmic winds, but the winds of pristine wisdom, like winds stirring an ocean.

Sentient beings do not realize these appearances to be self-appearances of that noumenon, but perceive them to be other-appearances, that is, appearances of something else. Through mistaking these basal appearances, which are self-appearances of the basal sphere of reality, as being other-appearances, cyclic existence dawns, in dependence upon which karmic appearances are established. This is how you fall into cyclic existence as a mistaken sentient being, whereas if these appearances are recognized as self-appearances of the noumenon, you are a realized pure being.

Since these appearances arise from the three subtle levels of



appearance associated with winds and refined essential drops, a yogi, through the Path of Method—that is to say, general Highest Yoga Mantra—causes those three subtle vivid white, red, and black appearances to cease by way of quintessential practices of the completion-stage. These practices, related with the channels, winds, and drops of essential fluid, cause the winds to enter, remain, and dissolve in the central channel, and when through these special methods those three subtle levels of mistaken appearances stop, a yogi achieves a body of pristine wisdom that does not involve the fluctuations of these three subtle levels of appearance.

This is indeed a distinctive feature of Mantra, a definitive fact, but according to the path of the Great Completeness, it is not necessary to intentionally bind the winds; rather, there are other quintessential instructions. Through meditating within the primordially unfluctuating pristine wisdom of intrinsic awareness, all fluctuations of the three subtle levels of appearance become self-extinguished and self-purified, whereby a body of actual pristine wisdom, unfluctuating intrinsic awareness, is achieved.

Khetsun Sangpo: This way of achieving great pristine wisdom not subject to the fluctuations of the three subtle levels of appearance is indeed a distinctive feature of definitive Secret Mantra—that is true enough. However, in the system of the Great Completeness, it is not necessary to intentionally bind the winds in the central channel through the types of meditations and so forth set forth in the general path of Highest Yoga Mantra in the generation-stage and completion-stage where there are many explanations of the channels, winds, and drops. Rather, in the Great Completeness you are introduced to and identify pristine wisdom, empty of obstruction, the primordial mode of abiding that is the basal mode of abiding beyond the fluctuations of these three levels of subtle appearance, the final fruit, and meditate within it. Through doing this, all movements and operations of the three subtle levels of appearance are self-extinguished and self-purified—they are naturally extinguished and naturally purified—whereby you are capable of achieving a Buddha's body of attributes, the noumenal self-cognizing definitive pristine wisdom that is the final fruit.

Hence, in the system of this path itself it is not necessary to cease the winds in the central channel and so forth because although that is the path of the completion-stage of Mantra involving constructs, here when the actual pristine wisdom of clear light without constructs is taken as the path, [such stoppage] is not needed, and it does not rely on that.

Khetsun Sangpo: In the unsurpassed Great Completeness in its own system, when you take as the path the actual pristine wisdom of clear light without constructs, such stoppage of the winds through causing them to enter, remain, and dissolve in the central channel—as occurs in the path of the completion-stage of Mantra systems involving constructs—is not needed. The Great Completeness, relying on what is inconceivably beyond constructs, has an even more special and superior meaning of clear light, in which the fruit is taken as the path. Thus, it does not need to rely on the techniques of the generation-stage and completion-stage.

*Those who adhere to the Path of Method think:* No matter how good this is, because it does not depend upon the Path of Method that causes the winds to enter the central channel, it does not exceed the mere meditation of the Middle Way School.

Khetsun Sangpo: These persons' idea is that because the Great Completeness does not depend upon the usual Highest Yoga Tantra techniques for causing the winds to enter, remain, and dissolve in the central channel, it does not exceed even the meditation of emptiness endowed with all supreme aspects as found in the Middle Way School. This is what some who are attached to usual Highest Yoga Tantra, called the Path of Method, think.

*Answer:* This is a case of not understanding important essentials. Gathering the winds in the central channel is for the sake of the dawning of actual pristine wisdom. [In the system of the Great Completeness] when you identify the actual pristine wisdom, then by meditatively familiarizing from within it, the fluctuations of the three appearances gradually cease, and a body of non-fluctuation is achieved. Hence, it is not that there is no way of being introduced to the actual pristine wisdom without stopping the fluctuations of the appearances because it is identifiable right now. And when it is, yogis manifestly achieve cessation of karmic winds and their transformation solely into winds of pristine wisdom.

Khetsun Sangpo: Here in the system of the Great Completeness, if you are able to identify the actual pristine wisdom and meditatively familiarize with it without distraction to anything else, the fluctuations of these three subtler levels of mind gradually cease, and you achieve a body beyond the fluctuations of the three subtle levels of appearance.

If you meet with a competent and qualified lama, you can be

introduced right now to pristine wisdom without stopping the white, red, and black subtle appearances. Indeed, there are some persons whom a lama tries to introduce the pristine wisdom, but who for the time being do not have the fortune, the background, for succeeding in identifying it. If, however, you are introduced to it and can identify it and cultivate meditation within it, then in time all karmic winds of cyclic existence that are the mounts of mistaken mind cease. Through this, all winds are transformed into just winds of pristine wisdom that are causes of liberation, and all appearances are transformed into endless purity. This can be manifestly accomplished in direct perception.

This will be taught in detail below.

Because most meditations of the Middle Way have a predominant emphasis on an emptiness devoid of proliferations, they accord with the reference in the *Kālachakra Tantra* to “Those lacking immutable [bliss]...”

Khetsun Sangpo: The *Kālachakra Tantra* speaks of the danger of not identifying the intrinsic awareness that is the fundamental reality, and instead just becoming attached to an emptiness devoid of conceptual proliferation.

However, here intrinsic awareness itself is the final great bliss since it is intrinsically-aware-pristine-wisdom (*rig pa ye shes*) beyond the eight collections of consciousness—which are the bases of designation of awareness (*blo*), knowing (*rig pa*), and consciousness (*shes pa*)—the immutable, actual great bliss.

Khetsun Sangpo: In the system of the Secret Mantra Great Completeness, self-cognizing noumenal intrinsic awareness itself is the final great bliss. The terms “awareness” (*blo*), “knowing” (*rig pa*), and “consciousness” (*shes pa*) are designated with respect to the eight collections of consciousness, but self-cognizing pristine wisdom, intrinsic awareness (*rig pa*), immutable actual great bliss, is beyond all of them.

Hence, the Mantra path is superior to Sūtra, and if there is not even a single path of Highest Yoga Mantra exceeding this which, being above even the completion-stage of common Highest Yoga Mantra involving constructs, accords in meaning with the name “Great Completeness,” there is no need to mention that it exceeds the Middle Way of the Causal Vehicle.

Khetsun Sangpo: Secret Mantra is the Effect Vehicle, and within the Effect Vehicle the Great Completeness, which is called this

because it is the completion of all the progressions of grounds and paths, is the supreme of all vehicles.

Consequently, there is no necessity to say much.

*Furthermore, those who adhere only to the completion-stage of Mantra involving constructs think:* Since in the Mantra path an illusory body is taught, whatever has it has the quick path of Mantra. However, meditative cultivation of such a path does not exist in the Great Completeness, and therefore it does not explicitly implement in its path a substantial cause of Form Bodies. Hence, it is lower than the completion-stage involving constructs.

Khetsun Sangpo: Due to prior familiarization with only the completion-stage of Mantra involving constructs some think that there is nothing else beyond it. “Constructs” (*mtshan bcas*) here means that while cultivating the completion-stage they have an object of observation that is their reference point, something being aimed at, something that the mind is getting at. These practitioners mistakenly think that for a Mantra system to be a quick path it must clearly teach techniques for achieving an illusory body. Not finding this in the meditative system of the Great Completeness, they mistakenly conclude that the Great Completeness lacks a path that actually cultivates a substantial cause of a Buddha’s Form Body, due to which the Great Completeness is lower than the completion-stage in the Mantra system involving constructs.

*Response:* When the substantial cause of Form Bodies that is the factor of self-effulgence in the sphere of clear light is itself thoroughly purified, it dawns as manifold appearances of Complete Enjoyment Bodies. Consequently, it is not necessary to intentionally achieve them.

Khetsun Sangpo: Mi-pam-gya-tsho answers that it is not necessary to intentionally achieve the substantial causes of a Buddha’s Form Body because the complete substantial cause of Form Bodies is the self-effulgence primordially existing in the sphere of clear light. When it is purified, it dawns as manifold appearances of Form Bodies, not just as one or two Form Bodies, but as inconceivably many appearances. Thus, while you presently have within yourself the clear light of the effect state, the intentional achievement of causes of Form Bodies as done in Mantra involving constructs is not needed.

When you are set in meditative equipoise within self-appearing clear light, whatever appears dawns as the sport of exalted bodies, and when obstructions are purified, within having proceeded to the situation of release of essential purity Form Bodies adorned with the marks and beauties arise in self-dawning without exertion.

Khetsun Sangpo: The essentially pure noumenon is the basis of release for all sentient beings. From having passed to this situation of release of essential purity upon purifying your obstructions of karma and afflictive emotions, Form Bodies, adorned with the thirty-two marks and eighty beauties and so forth, spontaneously arise of their own accord in a self-dawning manner without exertion.

And when, in [the process of] leapover, intrinsic awareness arrives at its full measure,

Khetsun Sangpo: In the practice of spontaneous leapover there are four stages, called the four appearances—increase of visionary appearances (*nyams snang gong 'phel*), awareness arriving at its full measure (*rig pa tshad phebs*), extinction in the noumenon (*chos nyid zad sa/ chos nyid zad pa*), and direct perception of the noumenon (*chos nyid mngon sum*).<sup>a</sup>

appearances of Complete Enjoyment Bodies dawn limitlessly. When your own body also appears as light and exalted body, you enter into the primordial sphere of reality, actualizing the clear light of a non-learner.

Khetsun Sangpo: Not only do all appearances dawn as appearances of Complete Enjoyment Bodies, but also your own present coarse body appears as a body of light, no longer appearing as made of material particles of blood, bone, and the like. Dissolving into the primordial noumenal expanse of pristine wisdom, you actualize the clear light of the final effect as a non-learner, beyond training in grounds, paths, and so forth.

Even the material body of this lifetime dissolves into light, whereupon you rise in a divine body of union of a non-learner.

Khetsun Sangpo: The coarse body of this lifetime, a pile of true suffering composed of flesh, blood, bone, and so forth projected by afflictive emotions and karmas in former lifetimes, dissolves

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<sup>a</sup> For another version of the four appearances in which direct perception of the noumenon is put first, see 129.

and melts into light, whereupon you are able to rise in a divine body of pristine wisdom of a non-learner.

Hence, if you are able to actualize a non-learner's union, whether or not until that point your body appears as a divine body characterized by the twelve examples of illusion, it is the same,

Khetsun Sangpo: Since through the system of the Great Completeness you can actualize in direct experience a non-learner's clear light union of the final effect, if until that point of actualizing a pure illusory body when your body is yet to dissolve into rainbow and light, whether or not your body appears as a divine body characterized by the twelve examples of illusion, that is to say, of not being truly established like a dream, a mirage, an optical illusion, a sky-city, and so forth, it is of no consequence.

but if when your body is about to dissolve into light, you rise in a body of great transference (*'pho ba chen po 'i sku*), that itself is indeed no different from an illusory body of a learner, even though in the perspective of others it even appears as the former body, as was the case with Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra.

Khetsun Sangpo: There is a point when, in achieving a rainbow light body, you can totally dissolve your old body, or you can keep the old body and use it in manifold ways for the sake of others, the latter mode being called "a body of great transference." In India and Tibet there are only two people who achieved this version of a rainbow body, Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra, since it is very difficult to be able to keep the old body when you are in the process of dissolution into a rainbow body.

Mi-pam-gya-tsho's point is that when your own body is about to dissolve into light, if you rise in a body of great transference, then that is no different from an illusory body as it is described in the usual system of Highest Yoga Tantra, in which you have two bodies, an illusory body and your old body. To others, the body of great transference appears as if it is the old body, the former body, as was the case with Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra.

Therefore, in the completion-stage of the father tantras, such as *Guhyasamāja* and so forth, great emphasis is indeed put on setting forth the two—illusory body and clear light—and practice is done in this manner.

Khetsun Sangpo: Highest Yoga Mantra is divided internally into

three classes: father tantras such as *Guhyasamāja* and *Vajrabhairava*, mother tantras such as the *Chakrasamvara*, and nondual tantras such as *Kālachakra*, but such a division is not made with regard to the three external tantras, Action, Performance, and Yoga.

However, even though in the completion-stage of mother tantras and in *Kālachakra* the mode of oneself rising in an illusory body is not deliberately set forth,

Khetsun Sangpo: The practice of illusory body is not expounded with particular emphasis in, for instance, the *Chakrasamvara Tantra* and the *Kālachakra Tantra*, but they contain features fulfilling this role.

through the force of the statement [in the *Kālachakra* system] that by engaging in union with a great seal of empty form on the occasion of subsequent mindfulness<sup>a</sup> you achieve the feat of the great seal it is implicit that you shine forth in the aspect of a divine body of empty form.

Khetsun Sangpo: The statement that you actually achieve the feat of the innate great seal, which is a divine body of form empty of material particles, implies that you achieve an illusory body.

And similarly:

- Even in the path of leapover in the Great Completeness, when intrinsic awareness has arrived at its full measure, it is not that endlessly manifold divine bodies illustrating the twelve examples of illusion do not shine forth, and it is not that you do not shine forth in the aspect of a divine body, the principal deity being among them.

Khetsun Sangpo: You appear in the aspect of a divine body, the main deity of all of the limitless divine beings that are appearing. In the Great Completeness this is a case of identifying divine bodies of innate clear light that already are primordially established in the noumenon, and thus when they are identified, they appear continuously.

All of those that have dawned having dissolved into the sphere of essential purity, you again actualize union.

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<sup>a</sup> The completion-stage in the *Kālachakra* system is comprised by the six-branched yoga—individual withdrawal (*sor sdud, pratyāhara*), concentration (*bsam gtan, dhyāna*), stopping-vitality (*srog rtsol, prāṇāyāma*), retention ('*dzin pa, dhāraṇā*), subsequent mindfulness (*rjes dran, anusmṛti*), and meditative stabilization (*ting nge 'dzin, samādhi*).

Khetsun Sangpo: The deities dawn from within the sphere of essential purity and dissolve into the sphere of essential purity, and again appear as divine bodies of union.

- When breakthrough practitioners actualize actual pristine wisdom in the intermediate state, there is no exertion of rising in a divine body subsequent to this, of withdrawing the divine body into the sphere of clear light through whole withdrawal (*ril 'dzin*)<sup>a</sup> and serial destruction (*rjes gzhi*),<sup>b</sup> and of again rising and so forth. However, due to setting in meditative equipoise on the noumenon, which is devoid of rising [in a divine body] and withdrawing [that divine appearance], attachment to the three doors of body, speech, and mind as having their own thingness is purified, whereby—at the time of the fruit—body is divine body, speech is exalted speech, and mind is omniscience.

Khetsun Sangpo: Of the modes of the view in the Great Completeness, one being leapover, which is associated with spontaneity, and the other being breakthrough, which is associated with essential purity, here Mi-pam-gya-tsho speaks about the mode of practicing the path in breakthrough, which has a particular emphasis on emptiness, somewhat like the Middle Way School. When a practitioner of breakthrough rises in a complete enjoyment body in the intermediate state, actual pristine wisdom is actualized, and due to being set in the noumenon of equality in which rising in divine form and dissolving it are not needed, misapprehension of body, speech, and mind as having their own thingness, or as being regular like an ordinary being, is purified such that body, speech, and mind are divine without the exertion of rising, dissolving, and rising again.

What thoroughly pure exalted body, speech, and mind exceeding those are there to be achieved! These come down to the same essential fact.

Khetsun Sangpo: Because divine body, speech, and mind are already established in the clear light of the Great Completeness, the modes of achieving divine body according to the systems of illusory body and according to the Great Completeness clear light come down in the end to the same point.

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<sup>a</sup> In this style of withdrawal the worlds of the environment and of the beings within it melt into light all together.

<sup>b</sup> In this style of withdrawal the world of the environment melts into light and dissolves into the beings within it, and then the world of beings melts into light and dissolves into oneself, after which oneself melts into light.



## 6. Empty Forms

*Also, one scholar, who had not realized the profound essentials, earlier put forth a challenge:* Since even those who have not cultivated the path see leapover appearances, those appearances are not real; they are impure appearances.

*Response:* There are two ways of positing the pure and the impure:

- When the pure and the impure are posited in terms things that are causes and effects, all virtuous causes and good effects are taken to be pure, and all non-virtuous causes and painful effects are taken to be impure.
- All phenomena compounded by actions and afflictive emotions are impure, and the noumenon, which is not compounded by actions and afflictive emotions, is pure.

From between these two modes of positing the pure and the impure, this system of the challenger thinks that because these [leapover visions] are not achieved by a virtuous cause, they are impure.

Khetsun Sangpo: The challenger also thinks that because leapover appearances are not uncompounded, they are impure.

In that case, the noumenon and the basal great seal would [absurdly] be impure. If those [that is, the noumenon and the basal great seal] are achieved by virtuous causes, they would [absurdly] become compounded.

If it is the case that whatever is seen even by those who have not cultivated the path is necessarily impure, then when those with wicked attachment, such as Sunakṣhatra, and the many who had not earlier entered the path saw Buddha's body, Buddha would be impure.

Khetsun Sangpo: The monk Sunakṣhatra (*legs skar/ legs pa'i skar ma*) spent twenty-five years with Shākyamuni Buddha but declared that he had not seen a single good quality in the Buddha. If it were that all that those who have not cultivated the spiritual path see is necessarily impure, then since Shākyamuni Buddha was seen by impure persons such as Sunakṣhatra, the Buddha would absurdly have to be impure.

Since it is said [in texts of quintessential instructions] that through meditating for one day empty forms dawn, then:

1. If empty forms are pure because the seers of the appearing empty forms have meditatively cultivated the path, then is it that upon their

consciousnesses having become pure due to meditatively cultivating the path, what is seen by them is established to be pure?

2. Or, is it that since empty forms dawn due to a cause that is a pure path, empty forms are pure?

Which is it?

Khetsun Sangpo: Do you want to say that whatever that person sees is pure? Or do you want to say that empty forms dawn due to a cause that is a pure path and hence are pure?

According to the first, when a Buddha perceives sentient beings, all sentient beings would be pure because they are in the perspective of the perception of one who has completed the path. In that case, they would be pure despite not having meditatively cultivated the path.

According to second, empty forms would be effects because of appearing from meditatively cultivating the path. In that case, at a time when one had not meditatively cultivated the path, is it that even though these appearances of the clear light do not manifestly exist in the continuums of sentient beings, they exist in the manner of being suitable to dawn, or not?

Khetsun Sangpo: Is it that empty forms—appearances of the clear light—are suitable to appear, like seeds of empty forms, since they exist in the noumenon of the mind but due to adventitious obstructions have not yet manifested because the path has not yet been cultivated?

If they do not exist in the continuums of sentient beings in the manner of being suitable to dawn, then the natural maṇḍala, which is what is concentratedly focused on, would not exist, whereby even though these [appearances of the clear light] did dawn, they would lack the essentials for release.

Khetsun Sangpo: In the path you focus on the matrix-of-one-gone-to-bliss, which naturally exists in the continuums of all sentient beings, in order to purify it of adventitious defilements and manifest the noumenon. However, if the natural maṇḍala (*rang bzhin gyi dkyil 'khor*), that is to say, the matrix-of-one-gone-to-bliss, does not exist in the continuums of sentient beings, then even if empty forms did dawn, the seed of release would not be present.

If [these appearances of the clear light] exist [in the continuums of sentient beings in a manner of being suitable to dawn], are they produced by a path preceding them as a cause, or not? If not, then your own assertion

[that if something appears without cultivating the path, then it is impure] has established that they are impure.

If [these empty forms] are produced [by a prior path], then the path must exist beginninglessly, due to which there would not be any sentient beings who had not meditatively cultivated the path. Furthermore, if the path is newly generated, then it would [absurdly] follow that [empty forms] would be impure since even hearing and thinking that appear to be the path appear to those who have not cultivated the path. Therefore, the path itself would also be impure, whereby it could not purify what is other.

If you assert that [empty forms] are pure because they are involved with pure methods of Mantra such as a lama's guidance and so forth, indeed a lama's guidance is a means of purifying an impure continuum, but that is a case of purification having cause and effect and is not in the pure nature, in which case those basal phenomena that are not involved with quintessential instructions would [absurdly] be impure.

Khetsun Sangpo: In the view of the Great Completeness it is not necessary to depend on cause and effect. In the Great Completeness release comes only by way of paths identifying the primordially pure nature as just that—it is not asserted that purity comes about in dependence upon causes gradually producing pure effects. The view of the Great Completeness is not in the context of the relationship of cause and effect, but is a matter of whether you can distinguish the primordially in-dwelling basal body of attributes, as it is for what it is. Aside from purifying adventitious defilements obstructing it, this is not concerned with cause and effect.

*Someone might think:* Basal phenomena do not have any purity or impurity.

*Response:* Although those do not have any purity or impurity in the sense of cause and effect, why are they not naturally pure!

Moreover, when a Buddha perceives sentient beings, those sentient beings are not a Buddha's pure appearances from having cultivated the path, in which case a Buddha would [absurdly] have impure perception.

Khetsun Sangpo: The perceiver, a Buddha, is pure, but the sentient beings who are the objects seen are not pure. Buddhas perceive the impure relative to others' appearances (*gzhan snang*), but in terms of their own appearances (*rang snang*) they perceive only all-embracing purity.

*Also, someone might think:* The dawning of empty forms involved with cultivating the path of the completion-stage are natural signs (*rang rtags*) of karmic winds having entered, remained, and dissolved in the central channel. In that case, since here [in the leapover process of the Great Completeness empty forms] are seen without karmic winds needing to enter, remain, and dissolve in the central channel, these cannot fulfill the role of empty forms of the Mantra completion-stage.

*Response:* Both empty forms—whether they dawn upon having bound the winds or whether they dawn without having bound the winds—are similar in being the self-effulgence of clear light.

Khetsun Sangpo: Both those empty forms that appear in the completion-stage due to having bound the winds in the central channel and those empty forms that appear in the process of leapover in the Great Completeness without having bound the winds in the central channel are similar in being the external manifestation of the noumenal clear light existing within your continuum.

However, those empty forms that dawn due to having bound the winds in the central channel are mixed with factors produced by karmic winds, whereas empty forms that dawn naturally [without having to bind the winds in the central channel] are not mixed with factors generated by karmic winds; therefore, the latter are superior.

Khetsun Sangpo: Since karmic winds are what bind us in cyclic existence, naturally dawning empty forms, which are not related with them, are superior.

*Let us pose this question:* Why are empty forms that are seen upon the entry of karmic winds in the central channel the completion-stage?

*Someone answers:* Appearances that dawn due to winds in the right and left channels generate the mistaken appearances that are ordinary earth, stone, mountains, cliffs, and so forth, and hence they are impure, whereas empty forms that dawn upon the entry of winds in the central channel create nonmistaken effects within knowing the emptiness endowed with all supreme aspects, like prophetic configurations [in a mirror].

*Our response:* Does this central channel primordially exist as having a pure nature not produced by causes—namely, karmic winds and mistaken minds? Or does it arise from meditation?

If the central channel exists as primordially pure, then is it an effective thing established as such by the force of purity not depending upon prior progression on the path as its cause? Or is it a non-effective thing like

space, not arisen from causes? If the first, then such is the same for the empty forms that appear in the process of leapover. If the second, then how could what does not arise from causes have shape, size, and so forth, and how could it have holes in which one could stop karmic winds and so forth?

Moreover, is it a channel of light that is like an empty intestine? Or is there a mind of clear light not polluted by mistake—"the matrix maṇḍala of pristine wisdom"—inside it?

Furthermore, is the central channel matter or consciousness?

Khetsun Sangpo: Is the central channel made of material particles, or is it luminous and cognitive consciousness?

(Annotation: If the central channel is a compounded phenomenon, it is to be analyzed whether its causes are contaminated actions and afflictive emotions or not, whether it is obstructive or not, whether it is permanent or impermanent, whether it primordially exists or is newly arisen, and so forth.)<sup>a</sup>

Once it is a channel of light and has holes, it must be included within matter. In that case, this empty channel—which is primordially pure and primordially established without depending on causes and exists inside [the body that is like] a house—turns into a tenet of [non-Buddhist] Forders who assert that there is a material self [the size of] a hair and so on and is permanent.

Moreover, it is to be asked whether when someone's body is big, the central channel is big, and when someone's body is small the central channel is small; whether it has increase and decrease; what it is like at death, and so forth.

These assertions of the existence of such a real channel producing pure appearances are the manifest assertions by [non-Buddhist] Forders as when they say that there is a self the same size as the body or the mere size of a mustard seed.

Does consciousness continuously exist or not inside that central channel? If it does, then since it primordially has come into the central channel, what is the purpose of its [newly] entering now?

If consciousness has not continuously existed inside the central channel, then why is it that consciousness does not move in it? If it is that a consciousness that is accompanied by mistaken karmic winds does not move in the central channel, then since in your [system] there is nothing

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<sup>a</sup> The annotation is in small print embedded in both editions of the text; the author is likely Mi-pam-gya-tsho's student and editor, Shay-chen Gye-tsal (*zhe chen dgyes rtsal*) .

else aside from consciousness to achieve the path, consciousness could not enter there even though winds entered the central channel.

With respect to these empty forms seen when [winds] enter the central channel, does the basis for the dawning [of empty forms] exist inside the central channel or not? If it does, do you assert that the effulgence integral to the five lights of the wind of the matrix pristine wisdom exists primordially?

Khetsun Sangpo: As opposed to karmic winds, the wind of the matrix pristine wisdom, or noumenal pristine wisdom, is primordially endowed with five lights in the manner of spontaneous, integral attributes. This noumenal wind is the basis from which empty forms shine forth.

Or is it that [the basis of the dawning of empty forms] did not exist previously and is newly generated after the entry of [karmic] winds inside [the central channel which is] like an empty intestine? If it is in accordance with the first, then you would have to assert that whether one meditatively cultivates the path or not, luminous self-effulgence primordially exists in the vajra body. If it is in accordance with the second, then how is it that these empty forms—that [you claim] previously did not exist and are produced from causes—are empty forms, like rainbows?

*The opponent answers:* Because they lack obstructive contact, they are empty forms.

*Response:* Though empty of obstructive contact, why are they not effective things, like consciousness? Therefore, how could these [empty forms] stop mistaken appearances? [The mistaken could not stop the mistaken] because adherence to apprehended-object and apprehending-subject could not be stopped with regard to them.

Therefore, even though it might be allowed that empty forms—that are imprints [that is, results] of winds entering the central channel—are in the completion-stage of Mantra, you are just arbitrarily mouthing propositions about the completion-stage without knowing any of the essentials of that central channel, which is where [the winds] enter, with respect to its not being in the company of the obstructions of mistake.

Khetsun Sangpo: Saying a lot about the completion-stage without knowing much of anything about it and saying whatever comes to mind is like claiming to be a traveler without knowing anything about the road being travelled.

Therefore, it must be asserted that:

Khetsun Sangpo: The opponent mouths a great deal about the completion-stage but does not know how to explain the features of the central channel into which the winds are to dissolve. Hence, Mi-pam-gya-tsho will now identify what it is.

- The matrix-of-One-Gone-to-Bliss or sphere of reality, self-arisen pristine wisdom, noumenon of the mind, the pure nature, emptiness endowed with all supreme aspects, primordially exists.

Khetsun Sangpo: When all of the karmic winds of cyclic existence have stopped and all of the consciousnesses that are mounted on them stop, at the end there is the matrix-of-One-Gone-to-Bliss called by these various names. As the noumenon of the mind, it is beyond consciousnesses involved with apprehended-object and apprehending-subject; it is the inconceivable basis of emptiness, which from the viewpoint of its own entity is naturally pure, primordially existing in all sentient beings no matter who they are.

- Just this—which abides as the noumenon of the mind but, being a nature that is uncompounded, it has never experienced pollution by mistake, like space—abides in the center of the corporeal body in the manner of being its essence.

Khetsun Sangpo: If you want to understand the central channel, you need to consider it to be the noumenon of the mind. It always indwells, and even though it is that into which all dissolves, it is uncompounded, and, being like uncompounded space, is never polluted. Abiding in the center of the coarse body, which is made of flesh, blood, bone, and so forth, it is like a channel of light that is at its core.

- From the viewpoint of its luminosity, it has a nature of all aspects, such as an effulgence of the five lights, drops, divine bodies, and so forth.
- Beyond the phenomena of minute particles like a prophetic configuration [in a mirror], it has primordially abided, and through the power of quintessential instructions of the path it manifests outwardly.

Khetsun Sangpo: The central channel is not composed of matter, being beyond the phenomena wrought by the eight types of material particles. A yogi enters the path of Secret Mantra, through which the special capacities of a lama's quintessential instructions and implementation of them in practice bring about manifestation

of the central channel, which had not been manifest, like a rainbow. Thereby it can function as that into which karmic winds enter and dissolve.

- Moreover, this indestructible drop, which is the foundation for achieving the three vajras, is a central mass of light that is the support and is the matrix maṇḍala of the winds of pristine wisdom that depend upon this [support]; it is the basis for concentrated focusing.

Khetsun Sangpo: This central channel, from viewpoint of its serving as the support, is a mass of light and, from the viewpoint of what depends upon this support, is the matrix maṇḍala of the winds of pristine wisdom that depend upon it. It is the drop indestructible by any means, the basis that through concentrated focusing on it manifests the three vajras of body, speech, and mind. It is the foundation, or real cause, for all Buddhas' achievement of the three vajras of body, speech, and mind.

- The mode of concentrated focusing is to meditate on a central [channel] of light in the center of the body, and from binding the winds empty forms of pure nature appear, like a rainbow when the light of a crystal meets [the light of] the sun.

Khetsun Sangpo: You meditate on a central channel that has a nature of light in the center of the body. Then, from performing the pot-like breath control not allowing the karmic winds to move about, the wind of pristine wisdom is in its natural state, whereupon many unimpeded empty forms are seen, like the rainbow of lights cast from a crystal struck by the light of the sun. If a crystal does not encounter light, the rainbow lights that it could cast are not seen, but when hit by light, they are seen.

These empty forms of pure nature are not like the various types of visionary experience that are due to adventitious mistake; rather, these empty forms of pure nature appear in dependence upon the capacities of the central channel.

The central [channel]—the mind, or pristine wisdom, of natural clear light—and that which depends on it, namely, the effulgence of the wind of pristine wisdom, can never be proved to be compounded phenomena arisen from causes.

Khetsun Sangpo: The central channel is pristine wisdom that has a nature of clear light; it is not mistaken mind. The great pristine wisdom that itself is the fruit, and the empty forms that manifest



by way of the wind of that pristine wisdom as its effulgence are not at all like ordinary compounded things arisen from causes. Since empty forms depend on the movement of the wind of pristine wisdom, they have the nature of arising from the primordial inconceivable noumenon as their cause. They are not created by adventitiously arisen mistaken things as their cause. The primordially arisen noumenon could never be proven to be a compounded phenomenon.

If such were proven, all presentations of the path would be destroyed.

Khetsun Sangpo: There would be no way to present the completion-stage or the mode of procedure of the final path.

Therefore, the matrix-of-One-Gone-to-Bliss, the noumenal pristine wisdom of clear light abides in natural flow as the mode of abiding of all things; it is just empty and luminous, not preventing anything.

Khetsun Sangpo: The basic constituent that is the matrix-of-One-Gone-to-Bliss, the noumenon, the self-effulgent pristine wisdom, is the final mode of abiding, or mode of subsistence, of all phenomena ranging from forms through omniscience that naturally is such without being fixed up that way by any other factors. This inconceivable noumenon is empty in its own right, naturally luminous, and unimpededly effulgent.

Due to not having any aspect of a compounded phenomenon with limited luminosity, it in brief is a union of luminosity and emptiness, devoid of verbalization [beyond thought and expression].

Not understanding its essentials, [others] assert that the noumenon is a mere eliminative emptiness.

Khetsun Sangpo: Not knowing the essentials of this inconceivable union of luminosity and emptiness, they immediately take the expression “noumenon” to refer to a mere emptiness, a nothingness.

Thinking that all appearances are impermanent things and that all factors of luminosity are factors of compounded minds, they make a mess of all presentations of the path.

Khetsun Sangpo: Their idea is that all whatsoever appearances are effective things made from material particles and that all whatsoever instances of luminosity are contained within minds compounded from causes and conditions.

Moreover, if we consider the time when empty forms, having vanished in the effulgence of the fundamental mind itself, do not manifest externally like [when rainbow-like lights] have dissolved in the light of a crystal,

Khetsun Sangpo: When sunlight cannot hit a crystal, even though it has rainbow-like lights integrally within itself, these appearances do not manifest outside, but when sunlight strikes it, the lights that are already within the crystal manifest without needing to be made by anything. Similarly, the light of our noumenal fundamental mind does not manifest externally as empty forms when it is not hit, so to speak, by the light of our spiritual practice, even though they are integral to the fundamental mind.

then indeed it is the case that at that time [empty forms] do not exist as fully qualified (*rang mtshan pa*) lights, colors, divine bodies, and drops in the manner of having the marks of things that are permanent and everlasting (*ther zug*). Nevertheless, [fundamental mind contains] the unimpeded opportunity for the dawning [of empty forms] in all multitudinous aspects, like the five lights that integrally exist in a crystal.

Khetsun Sangpo: Just as a crystal from its own capacities is ready to shine forth externally when sunlight hits it, the profound emptiness endowed with all aspects that has the capacity to shine forth in multitudinous aspects is in all respects unimpededly open.

Therefore, on the occasion of setting forth the presentation of spontaneity, it is not that:

- the explanations that the basis is the central channel and that what depends on it are drops in the aspects of shapes and colors
- and even the statements that these have the aspects of divine bodies and faces and arms

do not abide so in fact. This is because from meditative cultivation by way of the path appearances of divine bodies and lands, included within the empty forms of ten signs, increase without limit and are authentic paths that are the imprint of putting concentrated focusing on the body [in the manner] of the Vajra Vehicle, like the light of the sun meeting a crystal.

Khetsun Sangpo: When a yogi practices this type of meditation, the five winds become purified, whereupon inconceivable external appearances in limitless varieties of divine figures, pure lands, and so on that are included within the categories of ten signs (see the footnote on p. 77) increase and increase. Just as when sunlight

hits a crystal, a multitudinous variety of light rays are unimpededly emitted from the crystal, as a result of implementing quintessential instructions for putting concentrated focus on the body in terms of how to sit, how to gaze, and so forth, the yogi manifestly perceives and achieves paths of the Vajra Vehicle.

Hence, although these appearances of empty forms appear as shapes and colors and fluctuate, move, and so forth, they are not impermanent things having a nature of momentariness and are not phenomena that are effective actualities (*dnegos po*) because, aside from mere appearances, they are not material objects, because they are not established as phenomena composed of minute particles and because there is no limitation of their abiding in a particular place and so forth.

Khetsun Sangpo: Although these empty forms—empty but appearing like a rainbow—appear in various shapes such as square, round, rectangular, and so forth as well as colors such as white, yellow, red, blue, and so forth and do not just stay still in one place but move about here and there, they are not at all impermanent phenomena changing moment by moment and they are not functioning things built from material particles because they are mere appearances and are nonmaterial and because they have no limitation in terms of abiding in any particular place such as in any of the four directions.

*Question:* Relative to how they appear, they appear here and there, and they appear with shape and the like; hence, why are they not impermanent?

Khetsun Sangpo: The questioner is thinking that since when we consider how empty forms appear, they appear in a particular situation and with specific colors and shapes, they would have to be impermanent.

*Answer:* It is like the fact that although space appears to have the differences of being blocked or not blocked and appears to be square and so forth due to the [shape of a] vessel, this cannot posit that space is impermanent. Therefore, although [empty forms] appearing in various aspects dawn to the appearance factor of impermanent awarenesses that have them as their objects, they are not established even conventionally as those, and this being the case, what need is there to speak about their being established ultimately!

Khetsun Sangpo: Although a square container makes it seem that there is a square space inside it and a round container makes its

space look round, space itself has no differentiations; it always abides as a mere vacuity. The conventions of its being a certain shape or obstructed or not obstructed are just in our perspective; from its side space itself has no such differences. Though if you break a pot, its contents spill out, and thus it might seem to us that its space is destroyed, in fact space itself never changes; it is just a vacuity. Similarly, empty forms dawn variously to the appearance factor of an impermanent awareness, but when analyzed, they are not established even conventionally as those things as which they are appearing; thus, even more so they are not ultimately established.

Furthermore, a tantra says, “These that appear in blazing aspects are not nonexistent,” and so forth.

Khetsun Sangpo: From the viewpoint of mental appearance no one could say that an empty form such as an appearance in the aspect of blazing fire is nonexistent, but the basis of its appearance is empty, and therefore you cannot say that it exists. Its appearance, however, exists.

Hence, [empty forms] are not impermanent nor effective things.

Khetsun Sangpo: Because the basis of appearances of empty forms is emptiness, there is not even a speck of empty forms that is impermanent or is an effective thing.

*Question:* Do you assert that all empty forms—non-things that appear but are not effective things—are permanent?

Khetsun Sangpo: The questioner’s idea is this: These empty forms do appear to our minds, and they are not effective things like what appear to our eye consciousness and so forth and hence could not be obstructive forms. Since they therefore must be non-effective things, is it to be asserted that empty forms are permanent?

*Answer:* Whatever is established as an effective thing (*dnegos po*) is suitable to be posited as either permanent or impermanent, but such baseless [empty forms] cannot be posited as everlasting, permanent phenomena.

Khetsun Sangpo: The term “everlasting” (*ther zug*) is ancient vocabulary, explained by the master Wonch’uk, in commentary on the *Sūtra Unraveling the Thought*, as meaning “existing forever

unchangeably.” Baseless empty forms cannot be posited as permanent phenomena that exist forever.

Let us illustrate “permanence” with the empty form smoke [which is the first of ten empty forms that appear during the course of the path]. It does not abide forever:

- in accordance with what is conceived in the idea that this which has the aspect of grayish wafting, appearing at a certain time and at a certain place, existed earlier immutably just as it is seen [now] and will also exist forever at that place and time,

Khetsun Sangpo: If an appearance of smoke were permanent and existed forever, then for instance, if I see a certain column of smoke in this area, then many years later upon my return, I would see the exact same column of smoke in the same place, but such is impossible. If the empty form that appears in the process of meditation were a permanent phenomenon that existed forever, then this which has the aspect of billowing smoke, which appeared at a certain time and at a certain place, would have to exist immutably as it was before, just as it was seen previously, and in the future it would have to exist permanently and stably at that time and at that place also.

- or in accordance with what is conceived in the idea that it always exists within the mind.

Khetsun Sangpo: The other type of thought is that the smoke that appears as the first of the empty forms would always exist within the mind that way.

If it did, then with respect to empty forms specifications—in the perspective of how they appear—would not be possible such as specifics of larger and smaller shapes, many or few in number, moving about, going and coming, and times of existing and not existing, and so forth, since an intermittent mode of appearance is not feasible in the permanent.

Khetsun Sangpo: Appearing sometimes but not other times is not feasible among the permanent.

It also could not be said that, like space, empty forms are permanent but appear variously in terms of how they appear because there are no empty forms other than merely what appear.

*Question:* If empty forms are inexpressible as being either permanent

or impermanent and are reduced to being just superimpositions by conceptuality like an inexpressible self, then how could they be fit to be experienced as objects appearing to direct perception?

Khetsun Sangpo: The questioner is wondering whether, given that empty forms are neither permanent nor impermanent, they are just nonexistent conceptuality exaggerated into existence, in which case they would not be fit to be experienced as objects of the mind with aspects of shape, color, and so forth.

*Answer:* When it is analyzed whether in reality [those appearances] are permanent or impermanent, effective things or non-effective things, they are not established as any of these, and hence they are called “empty forms.” If that were not the case, what else could they be other than either effective things, like pots and so forth, or non-effective things, like space and so forth!

Khetsun Sangpo: If they are effective things, they would have to be gross objects like pots or pillars, seeable with the eyes and touchable by the body, but they are not. Or, if they are non-effective things, they would be strictly empty, like space which is mere lack of obstructive contact.

Therefore, they are called “empty forms that are appearances of the projective prowess of fundamental mind” (*gnyug sems kyi rtsal snang stong gzugs*).

Khetsun Sangpo: Just as the projective prowess of fire gives rise to smoke, the inconceivable, immutable, noumenal fundamental mind is like a substance manifesting all sorts of empty forms that are appearances of its projective prowess. They dawn from it.

These appearances, within being empty of the dualistic phenomena of effective things and non-effective things, are the emptiness endowed with all supreme aspects unaffected in its own entity by pollutions of mistake; they are called “configurations,” the unimpeded natural effulgence of clear light not produced from causes.

Khetsun Sangpo: Though empty forms might seem to be produced from causes, they are not newly produced since they are the self-effulgence of the clear light noumenal fundamental mind that has always unimpededly manifested through to the present. This emptiness endowed with all supreme aspects is itself not produced from causes, and its entity is not at all affected by the defilements

of mistake. These appearances are like the configurations that appear when divination is performed using a mirror.

When such is understood, then even though in this sphere of clear light there are primordially no objects to be conceived as effective things or non-effective things, this which dawns variously in unimpeded self-effulgence is called “pristine wisdom empty in entity, luminous in nature, and all-pervasive in compassion.”

Khetsun Sangpo: When the effulgence of the emptiness endowed with all aspects is understood to be like the configurations in a mirror that appear in prophetic rituals, how could it be an object generating adherence as being an effective or non-effective thing! The emptiness endowed with all aspects—the primordially existent noumenal true mode of abiding, the clear light fundamental mind—which unimpededly dawns in various ways, clear within and clear without, is in terms of entity empty of inherent existence but is not just an absence, a voidness, but is luminous in nature, pervading all in empathetic compassion. It is pristine wisdom.

This basally abiding pristine wisdom, which is to be identified by those on the Path of Release and which is to be manifested by those on the Path of Method through concentrated focusing on essential places in the body, is the original basal maṇḍala. It is not newly arisen from causes.

Khetsun Sangpo: What is being identified and is being manifested is ultimately the basal body of attributes, the original basal maṇḍala; there is nothing new, such as something established from causes and conditions, to be actualized.

In this way, all—the noumenon as well as the appearances dawning from within the natural projective prowess of the noumenon—are ultimately beyond the extremes of effective things and non-effective things, but conventionally the convention of grand permanence (*rtaḡ pa chen po*) is employed.

Khetsun Sangpo: Although the noumenon and the appearances arising from it like smoke from fire are beyond all extremes, conventionally they are said to be grandly permanent, not to be confused with being merely permanent, that is to say, to be in class of permanent phenomena.

Since they are not effective things that are impermanent moment by moment and also are not permanent everlasting things and, although immutable, are also not mere emptinesses that are non-effective things, they exist

as bases of designation as grandly permanent. Hence, these differ from the assertion of non-effective things as permanent; when space and so forth are analyzed with respect to their being designated as permanent, they exist as only opposite from impermanence, but do not have any basis for designating them as permanent.

The sphere of clear light is unlike a mere nonexistence like the child of a barren woman, or a mere emptiness of material phenomena such as space and so forth. Because [empty forms] are manifestations that are self-appearances of clear light, they exist, and because they are not momentary, the convention of grand permanence is used.

*Objection:* Then, because they are not everlasting permanent phenomena, why do you not use the convention that they are impermanent?

*Answer:* That empty forms *appear* this way in terms of their mode of appearance [that is to say, they appear to be impermanent] is not contradictory.

Khetsun Sangpo: If we consider only the way they appear, empty forms do indeed appear to be impermanent.

However, in terms of the mode of abiding, how could something that has never undergone being produced cease?

Khetsun Sangpo: Only things that have been produced can cease, but the inconceivable clear light of which empty forms are the effulgence is beyond all such conventions.

That they cease is just one's own [conceptual] superimposition, and therefore the convention that empty forms are impermanent is not used, because such an expression would not be feasible within comprehension by a conventional consciousness. It is like the statement [in Dharmakīrti's *Commentary on (Dignāga's) "Compilation of Prime Cognition"*]:<sup>a</sup>

Because the [conceptually] isolatable are not intrinsically existent,

That they abide or do not abide is just to be analyzed.

They do not [abide or not abide].

When [empty forms] are understood this way, these appearances in leap-over are just naturally abiding.

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<sup>a</sup> Dharmakīrti, *tshad ma rnam 'grel gyi tshig le 'ur byas pa (pramāṇavārttikakārikā)*, in *bstan 'gyur (sde dge, 4210)*, TBRC W23703.174:189-304 (Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985).



Khetsun Sangpo: Because empty forms are the effulgence of the noumenal fundamental mind, they just naturally abide, but they appear in all sorts of ways.

They are external manifestations of effulgence from inside the central channel of light that penetrates the eyes. Hence, they are not polluted by mistake.

Khetsun Sangpo: Since the central channel is the place where the wind of pristine wisdom moves, winds of mistake do not move there. A light channel from the central channel connects to the eye channel. In leapover, the eyes' capacity to see is called the "water lamp lassoing the far ranging" (*rgyang zhags chu'i sgron ma*) because it lassoes, or apprehends, what is at a distance. Just as holding a mirror in front of you allows sight of what is behind you, so this light channel is that through which the internal effulgence is projected outside. By penetrating, or connecting to, the eyes, this light channel from within the central channel acts like a lens, allowing the effulgence of empty forms to be seen externally. Being the self-effulgence of the basal body of attributes manifest externally, the empty forms are not at all polluted by mistake.

Through cultivating over a long period the techniques of posture, gaze, and so forth in leapover, the deities that exist within the heart and are the creations of the body of attributes can manifestly be seen externally like being seen with the eyes. When, in a phase called "direct perception of the noumenon" (*chos nyid mngon sum*), you have been introduced to the body of attributes abiding in the basal state, you train in this projective prowess, gradually progressing through the remaining three levels called "increase of visionary appearances" (*nyams snang gong 'phel*), "awareness arriving at its full measure" (*rig pa tshad phebs*), and "extinction in the noumenon" (*chos nyid zad sa/ chos nyid zad pa*).<sup>a</sup> That is how in leapover progress over the grounds and paths is gradually made through to Buddhahood.

*Some who have heard little think:* These are seen by the watery orbs of the eyes of ordinary [persons] and hence are like earth, stone, mountains, rocky crags, and so forth because one is released through the power of cultivating the path [and not just by seeing such things through the

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<sup>a</sup> For another version of the four in which direct perception of the noumenon is put last, see above, 105.

eyes].

Khetsun Sangpo: Under the influence of wrong ideas, some think that if you can manifestly see empty forms, they must be seen by our ordinary watery eye, much as earth, stones, and the like are seen by the eyes, and thus could not be involved in the process of release, which necessarily occurs through cultivating the path.

*Response:* When during the day the empty forms of the ten signs appear as objects of someone with eyes open, they seem as if they are seen by the eye, but they, like those also seen during the night, are not physical phenomena that are objects of apprehension by the watery orbs of the eyes. Also, when during the night empty forms are seen, even if your eyes are not open, they come as if dawning in self-appearance in the path of the eyes.

Khetsun Sangpo: Although the empty forms of the ten signs (smoke, mirage, fireflies, butter-lamp flame, blazing fire at the end of time, moon, sun, black *rāhu*, lightning, and blue drop) can appear while your eyes are open, and thus it can seem that they are seen with the eyes and are like ordinary objects. However, they are not seen with the eyes, since the same empty forms are seen whether the eyes are open or closed during the day or at night, whereas ordinary objects are not seen if your eyes are shut.

The lamps of empty forms in leapover also dawn in the sphere of space due to the conditions such as sunlight and so forth, but these appearing signs of the clear light dawn even on occasions when the eyes are closed and on the occasion of the dawning of clear light in thick sleep.

Khetsun Sangpo: There are four lamps: the water lamp lassoing the far ranging (*rgyang zhags chu'i sgron ma*), the lamp of empty drops (*thig le stong pa'i sgron ma*), the lamp of the pure sphere (*dbyings rnam dag gi sgron ma/ dbyings kyi sgron ma/ nang dbyings rnam par dag pa'i sgron ma*), and the lamp of self-arisen wisdom (*shes rab rang byung gi sgron ma/ shes rab sgron ma*). Here the concern is mainly with the lamp of empty drops.

Therefore, the statement, "Empty forms are seen by the eyes," is a case of the inner inadequacies of those who have very little acquaintance with the path of the Vajra Vehicle slipping out from their mouths.

Khetsun Sangpo: They show that they do not have any familiarity with the paths of breakthrough and leapover and have not had any experience of the dawning of the clear light and are just making

guesses.

Therefore, although in the causal vehicle a noumenon that is a mere union of appearance and emptiness is indeed delineated, this taking of the emptiness endowed with all supreme aspects like prophetic configurations—the manifest appearance of clear light and of emptiness without any conjunction or disjunction—as an object of activity of direct perception is the final completion-stage of Mantra, presently taking as the path the original basal maṇḍala.

Khetsun Sangpo: The causal vehicle, the Perfection Vehicle, does delineate a noumenon that is a mere union of appearance and emptiness, but the completion-stage of Mantra takes as the path direct perception of the noumenal appearance of clear light and emptiness, undifferentiably of one taste, without any sense of these coming together or separating, as vividly as prophetic configurations appearing in a mirror. Emptiness endowed with all supreme aspects, the primordial mode of abiding that is the original basal maṇḍala, is taken right now as the path in dependence upon the path of leapover.

Hence, [something partially similar] is set forth in the *Kālachakra Tantra*, and not only that but also on the occasion of the lower type of Mantra [such as the Path of Method], through the power of having achieved calm abiding one holds the mind on a subtle drop at the heart and so forth, whereby upon the ceasing of the eighty natural conceptual consciousnesses, the three appearances dawn, and one sets in equipoise on the clear light after the end of the three appearances, and one rises again in an illusory body.

Khetsun Sangpo: When a person dies, the physical elements of earth, water, fire, and wind dissolve, whereby the eighty conceptions of this life completely cease and three appearances serially dawn. These three are called appearance, increase of appearance, and near-attainment and are also called white, red/orange, and black appearances. For someone without meditative experience, when these have entirely ceased and attention is somewhat restored, but upon the effulgence of the noumenon dawning only briefly due to lack of full attention the person lapses into confusion, straying into cyclic existence. However, in the process of dying or in meditation while alive, yogis who have familiarity with the view can remain in the clear light in accordance with their degree of familiarization have an immediate sense of unsurpassed

joy upon recognizing their own clear light noumenon which has become of one taste with the mother clear light. This is called “union.” A great happiness, a great joy, is produced, like meeting with a good friend that you knew some time ago. It is also said to be like a child being set on mother’s lap.

For someone who has acquaintance with meditation, the dawning of clear light is the culmination of the fruit of meditation over a long time. If this building were knocked down, and the small space of this room became of one taste with the great space, this would be an analog to the child clear light mixing with the mother clear light. The small empty noumenon of your own mind becomes undifferentiably of one taste with the inconceivable mother noumenon, the basal original all-good perspective, with immeasurable joy like encountering an earlier good friend or like a child being set on mother’s lap. This is undifferentiable basis and fruit, the basal body of attributes and final fruitional Buddhahood undifferentiably a single taste in complete buddhification.

With regard to the process of yogic meditation, through the power of having developed the mental stability of calm abiding, yogis hold the mind on a subtle drop at the heart, or the like, whereupon the signs of the dissolution of the elements dawn, the eighty natural conceptions cease, and the three appearances dawn and cease. Once the mother and child clear lights have met, yogis again and again set in meditative equipoise on the clear light so as to become accustomed to it, a result being the ability to actualize the same when dying. When yogis rise from having set in meditative equipoise on the clear light, from within this sphere of emptiness they instantaneously rise in an illusory body; emptiness itself dawns in form, like a fish suddenly rising out of water.

On the occasion of such a completion-stage, first the empty forms of the ten signs must dawn.

Khetsun Sangpo: For the eighty conceptions to cease and for the three appearances to dawn and finally for the clear light to dawn, yogis must first experience the signs of the dissolution of the four elements—earth, water, fire, and wind.

Since these mental imaginations must be achieved with great exertion, this path is a little slower relative to the Kālachakra path.

In the *Kālachakra Tantra* it is said that due to the fact that the noumenal matrix-of-One-Gone-to-Bliss endowed with the space vajra pervading space exists in yourself, [empty forms] will dawn if you are set in its own flow and concentratedly focus for just one day just through modes of gazing at the pure sphere of reality and through assuming meditative postures.

Khetsun Sangpo: Yogis gaze at the sphere of reality—which, just as space devoid of clouds and so forth, is devoid of any corruption of afflictive emotions and thus pure—within its natural flow, without making any adjustments. If just through special gazes and physical postures conceptuality concerned with the affairs of this life and so forth is not engendered and for a day you are able with determination to focus single-pointedly on just the mode of abiding, the suchness of emptiness, empty forms will definitely dawn.

This is definite because the *Vajragarbha Commentary* says:<sup>a</sup>

Having abandoned all contemplations  
Analyze for the period of one day.  
If you do not obtain belief in this,  
Then what I have said is a lie.

and:

If having thoroughly abandoned exertion toward other objects of observation even just for single day and night, you set the mind one-pointedly on emptiness, believable signs of the path will arise. This is for those who have become withdrawn though individual withdrawal [the first of six levels in the completion-stage]. If otherwise, childish beings with wanton indiscriminate intelligence will deride the word of the One-Gone-Thus. Hence, other than through the meditative stabilization of individual withdrawal, belief does not arise by meditating for one day and night by abandoning all contemplations.

Therefore, relative to lower Mantric tantras of the yoga of withdrawing the winds, this is a path of little exertion and faster.

Khetsun Sangpo: Those who are engaged in a system other than

<sup>a</sup> Vajragarbha (*rdo rje snying po*), *k ye'i rdo rje bsdus pa'i don gyi rgya cher 'grel pa* (*hevajrapīṇḍārthāṭkā*), in *bstan 'gyur* (*sde dge*, 1180(a)), TBRC W23703.2:2-253 (Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985); Peking 2310, vol. 53. This is Vajragarbha's *Extensive Commentary on the "Condensed Meaning of the Hevajra Tantra"*, which is done in the manner of the *Kālachakra Tantra*, that is to say, through the grid of the *Kālachakra* teachings.

the meditative stabilization of individual withdrawal in the Kālachakra system do not attain believable signs of the path through just meditating on reality for one day and night. Through this it can be ascertained that in the Kālachakra system these signs, specifically empty forms, easily appear, and therefore the Kālachakra path is a path of little exertion and is faster in relation to the lower Tantras, that is to say, the Father and Mother Tantras as well as those below Highest Yoga Tantra.

Great Completeness leapover is a path even faster than the individual withdrawal of Kālachakra. Even though the *Kālachakra Tantra* describes a path for actualizing the clear light through darkness yoga and so forth, the meaning of partaking in fundamental self-light in self-flow without relying on those [techniques] is hidden and not set forth in the *Kālachakra Tantra*, there being no need to mention other tantras, but it is manifestly taught in the Vajra Matrix Vehicle.

Khetsun Sangpo: The *Kālachakra Tantra*, the indispensable non-dual tantra within Highest Yoga Mantra, mentions a path for actualizing the clear light through darkness yoga and so forth but indeed does not explain it in detail, and it hides and does not set forth partaking in the self-dawning of noumenal self-arisen great pristine wisdom of spontaneously present fundamental mind of clear light in natural flow, whereas these are clearly taught in an easily accessible way in the inconceivable quintessential instructions of leapover in the Great Completeness, the Vajra Matrix Vehicle, which therefore is faster. As Shāntideva's *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds* says, the realizations of higher yogis overwhelm those of the lower. Not only does the higher system contain all the paths of the lower systems, but also it has quintessential instructions absent in the lower.

How could there be something more profound than this clear explanation of the practice of the four lamps—this statement of how to actualize the pure appearances of self-appearing clear light without having to achieve it through a path of exertion! This is the peak of vehicles.

Khetsun Sangpo: In the tantras of the Great Completeness there are a huge number of words of teachings hidden and not taught in other tantras, but the indispensable quintessential instructions for progressing over the paths concern the four lamps—the lamp of the pure sphere, the lamp of self-arisen wisdom, the lamp of the

empty drops, and the watery lamp of the eye lassoing the far ranging. These are not taught in any way in the six-branched yoga of the completion-stage of the *Kālachakra Tantra*. Since these are manifestly presented in the tantras of the Great Completeness, its path, not relying on exertion, is the peak of all vehicles.

If one understands this well, then even the completion-stages of the Vajra Vehicle are hidden in the lower but are illuminated by the upper, reaching their climax in the texts of the Great Completeness. Therefore, just leapover should be understood as the consummation of the completion-stage.

Khetsun Sangpo: The completion-stages that are hidden in the lower tantras, are illuminated by the upper tantras, the progression being from Father Tantras to Mother Tantras to the Nondual Tantras. Since the Great Completeness is the monarch of all tantras, the completion-stages the Vajra Vehicle are manifestly present in their complete form in the texts of the Great Completeness. Therefore, spontaneous leapover itself should be understood as being the finality of the completion-stage.

*Objection by those who have only the quintessential instructions of the Path of Method, Secret Mantra involving constructs, and do not have the quintessential instructions of the Great Completeness:* The clear light, difficult to characterize [that is to say, difficult to come to know] due to its dawning from the imprint [or result] of the winds having entered the central channel, is the pristine wisdom of the completion-stage. Although realization of the face of intrinsic awareness, which is a mere union of appearance and emptiness, is good, it is the mere wisdom of Middle Way meditation and is not the completion-stage of Mantra because of not being a pristine wisdom that dawns from having practiced profound method. Therefore, introduction to and identification of innate pristine wisdom comes from only being an imprint of the winds having entered the central channel, and there is utterly no way of manifesting the clear light through introduction and identification in the Path of Release without relying on the winds entering the central channel.

Khetsun Sangpo: These people mistakenly think that manifestation of the mind of clear light necessarily depends upon withdrawing the winds in the central channel through the methods in the Father Tantras and the Mother Tantras; they do not understand that according to the Great Completeness this is not necessarily so.

*We ask you:* What is the essential point of pristine wisdom dawning when the winds have entered the central channel?

Khetsun Sangpo: Why does pristine wisdom dawn when the winds have entered the central channel?

If it does not come down to the fact that the original mind of clear light abides integrally (*rang chas su*),<sup>a</sup> no matter how you try to explain it, aside from only mouthing this statement—"The pristine wisdom dawns when the winds have entered the central channel"—you would have no point to describe about its dawning.

Khetsun Sangpo: In fact, the dawning of pristine wisdom upon the winds having entered the central channel derives from the primeval mode of abiding, primordial buddhification. Aside from this, they can only repeat that it happens that the clear light dawns when the winds enter the central channel.

Also, when the pristine wisdom that dawns as an imprint of the winds having entered the central channel is manifestly realized as the nature of things, it comes to be realized that such a mode of abiding of things has primordially been the noumenon of all phenomena and the noumenon of one's own mind because it is innate pristine wisdom.

Khetsun Sangpo: You realize that innate pristine wisdom has primordially been the nature of all things as well as of your own mind.

The mode of abiding that primordially is innate, or exists together with things, is called "innate pristine wisdom."

Khetsun Sangpo: Once things exist, pristine wisdom exists innately together with them. This is the primordial way things are. Being the mode of abiding, or basic disposition, or way of subsisting, it is *innate* pristine wisdom.

Upon realizing the noumenon of things with innate pristine wisdom, one is fully purified.

Khetsun Sangpo: Because the innate pristine wisdom realizes the noumenon of things, or mode of abiding of things, one is fully purified, but without such realization, one is not.

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<sup>a</sup> Or, intrinsically.



If you do not realize the mode of abiding of things, then of what help is the entry of [karmic] winds in the central channel?

Therefore, such a yogi realizes that “Indeed the noumenon, which is such from the primordial start, is not actualized without depending on the path,”

Khetsun Sangpo: Yogis realize that such an inconceivable noumenon existing within themselves cannot be actualized without familiarizing with the path but is actualized upon accustoming to the path.

“but whether it is realized or not, this noumenon of all phenomena abides in natural flow.” There is no other noumenon of all phenomena to be known through the power of a non-primordial path because release and bondage are created by realizing or not realizing the nature of things and are not due to anything else.

Khetsun Sangpo: Release is brought about by realizing the nature of phenomena. The state of being bound is brought about by not realizing the nature of phenomena.

Thus, at all times, whether one has or has not entered the path, the immutable innate noumenon is never absent and also does not change.

Khetsun Sangpo: The noumenon is innate and thus abides, as is, whether or not beings practice the path.

Hence, there are indeed some persons who cannot realize the immutable innate noumenon—the completion-stage without constructs—through only the quintessential instructions of the Path of Release but must actualize the completion-stage without constructs in dependence upon the completion-stage involving constructs.

Khetsun Sangpo: Without first practicing the completion-stage involving constructs they cannot fathom the completion-stage without constructs, but by initially practicing the completion-stage involving constructs they can easily actualize the innate pristine wisdom, the completion-stage without constructs. Some persons have to proceed this way, though others do not.

For example, there are:

Khetsun Sangpo: Within each of the paths—whether the Middle Way Consequence School or Mantra or others—there is a gradual mode of procedure, but Mi-pam-gya-tsho draws examples here from the lowest type of gradualists, those who must practice a

lower type of path before proceeding on the higher.

- persons who, without first actualizing the Hearer path, cannot realize the Great Vehicle
- persons who, without Mind-Only as an antecedent, cannot realize the meaning of the Middle Way
- persons who, without the Middle Way as an antecedent, cannot enter into Mantra
- likewise persons who, without the generation-stage and the completion-stage involving constructs as antecedents, cannot enter into the completion-stage without constructs
- and persons who, even beyond no constructs, gain simultaneously penetrative conviction in the path of the self-luminous clear light and thereupon cannot pursue tenets.

Khetsun Sangpo: There is an inconceivable path of self-luminous clear light in which there is simultaneous penetration, in a single instant passing through a huge number of levels of the path, like an arrow shot by a strong person instantaneously penetrating through many lotus petals.

Thus, that there are varieties of persons is not being challenged in any way. Just as due to the various dispositions, faculties, attitudes, and so forth of sentient beings even Buddha set forth the paths of the three vehicles

Khetsun Sangpo: A single teaching would not be sufficient for the many types of persons, so Buddha taught in multitudes of ways even within each of the three vehicles.

and even within the Great Vehicle itself five [types] such as going by way of a cattle cart and so forth,<sup>a</sup> there are indeed persons who cannot actualize

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<sup>a</sup> A set of five modes of progress on the path is taught in the Introduction to the *Forms of Definite and Indefinite Progress Sūtra*, *nges pa dang mi nges par 'gro ba'i phyag rgya la 'jug pa'i mdo* (*niyatāniyatagatimudrāvātārasūtra*), in *bstan 'gyur* (*sde dge par phud*, 202), TBRC W22084.62:63a.5-78a.4 (Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985); Peking 868, vol. 34, 281.1.3. The five are:

1. Ox chariot: those who try to cross the world systems in an ox chariot, advance one hundred yojanas over a long time, but are turned back by winds. These are Bodhisattvas who either take a liking to the Lesser Vehicle themselves or cause others to do so, thus dulling their wisdom.
2. Elephant chariot: those who advance two thousand yojanas in a hundred years and also take a liking to the Lesser Vehicle. The complete enlightenment of these two is indefinite; they will turn back from the path of highest wisdom.

the exemplified [actual] clear light without depending upon the completion-stage involving constructs, but all not limited to only this; it is irrefutable that there are those of sharp faculties definite in the lineage of the Vajra Vehicle despite not previously proceeding on the Middle Way and so forth, such as, for example, Indrabodhi.

Khetsun Sangpo: As mentioned earlier, as soon as Indrabodhi received the Guhyasamāja initiation, he simultaneously attained release and was released.

Hence, there are persons who, without needing to rely upon a completion-stage involving constructs, are introduced to and manifestly identify innate pristine wisdom through the force of:

- initiation into the original basal sphere of reality, the great body of attributes abiding primordially in oneself and
- a lama's quintessential instructions and the transference of magnificent blessings.

Although such is not possible in the lower Mantra Tantras due to those quintessential instructions having been hidden, those are set forth clearly, without being hidden, in the Great Completeness. Hence, it is not necessary to have first caused the winds to enter the central channel and so forth because if one is introduced to and identifies innate pristine wisdom, the purpose of causing the winds to enter the central channel is contained within this.

Khetsun Sangpo: If you identify your own entity, the primordially existent resultant body of attributes, there is no problem from not having trained in the path of the Middle Way or from not having first brought the winds into the central channel. All of these paths are contained within such an identification.

Thus, you engender ascertainment that the path of the Great Completeness is superior in accordance with the statement that through this quick path

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3. Sun and moon: those who cross the world systems over a long in the manner of the sun and the moon. These are Bodhisattvas who devote themselves fully the Great Vehicle, not conjoining their wisdom with a lower motivation.
  4. Magical creation of a Hearer: those who cross the world systems in the manner of a Hearer's magical emanation, having even greater devotion to the Great Vehicle, its practitioners, and practices.
  5. Magical creation of a One-Gone-Thus: those who want to cross the world systems and petition a One-Gone-Thus. These are Bodhisattvas who take special care to set other sentient beings on the path. The complete enlightenment of these three is definite; they will not turn back from the highest wisdom.

of little difficulty and great import you become fully buddhafied instantaneously.

Khetsun Sangpo: Since through the quick easy path of the Great Completeness you can achieve Buddhahood, what could be of greater importance!

This is because through Mantra [complete enlightenment] is achieved in one lifetime without relying on the Sūtra path's training for innumerable eons,

Khetsun Sangpo: Whereas in the Sūtra path it is necessary to practice for three periods of countless eons and so forth, you can, through the Mantra path and in particular the path of Great Completeness, achieve Buddhahood in one lifetime and one body.

and because the path of the Great Completeness has introduction to pristine wisdom—that in the Method completion-stage involving constructs dawns upon concentrated emphasis on essential points—in its natural context through the quintessential instructions of a lama.

Khetsun Sangpo: In dependence upon a lama's quintessential instructions you can be experientially introduced immediately to pristine wisdom in its own abode without needing to focus on essential points in the body as in the practice of the Method completion-stage.

When you are introduced to it in that manner, though you caused the winds to enter into the central channel, there is nothing this could do exceeding this introduction to the innate fundamental pristine wisdom.

Also, with regard to the mode of progress over the grounds and paths by those who are familiarizing [with the fundamental clear light] upon having realized it, there are big differences until direct perception of the exemplified [actual] clear light, due to differences in the level of exertion at the path.

Khetsun Sangpo: With greater exertion it is accomplished faster, and with lesser exertion it is accomplished more slowly.

However, from there on up, on a Superior's grounds whatever is done is fitting.

Khetsun Sangpo: Once you are on a Superior's ground (the first ground and above), there is no question of greater or lesser exertion. It is then not a matter of exertion.

Similarly, appearances of the clear light are achieved in the completion-stage involving constructs over a long period of time by withdrawing the winds and by [focusing on] subtle drops, and they are achieved in a short time through exertionless maintenance. [Nevertheless,] it is much more pure and superior to take as the path right now appearances of clear light existing in self-dawning; even from within the tantras of the Great Completeness this is not set forth except in only the exceedingly secret class of quintessential instructions; it is a hidden doctrine.

Khetsun Sangpo: In the completion-stage involving constructs as in Father Tantras such as mainly the *Guhyasamāja*, you practice a long time working at methods to cause the clear light to dawn with techniques such as withdrawing the winds into the central channel and meditating on subtle drops, thereby developing the capacity to hold the pot-like winds for a long time and bringing about the purificatory descent of the four joys. In the Great Completeness these appearances of the clear light are achieved in a shorter period through a lama's introduction to the clear light and your meditation on it. The long period of such practice required for Father and Mother Tantras is not needed in the Great Completeness; instead, right now through the lama's introduction you meditate on the clear light and maintain its continuum without exertion. Nevertheless, it is more superior to right now take the clear light as the path in accordance with the lama's introduction; this is a hidden doctrine taught only in the exceedingly secret class of quintessential instructions.

The top three classes of tantras are Mahā Yoga of generation, Anu Yoga of scripture, and Ati Yoga of completion. Mahā Yoga and Anu Yoga mainly set forth the generation-stage and the completion-stage. Above them is Ati Yoga of the Great Completeness. Within it four divisions are made in terms of lamas' quintessential instructions, these being the external cycle, the internal cycle, the secret cycle, and the exceedingly secret cycle. Again, within the exceedingly secret cycle, it is only in the class of quintessential instructions that this special doctrine for the speedy and easy dawning of the clear light is taught by way of lamas' quintessential instructions. In the other classes of tantra it is a hidden doctrine, whereas in the exceedingly secret class of quintessential instructions it is taught clearly.

Hence, when in this way you find the experiential perspective (*dgongs nyams*) of the union of (1) introduction to essentially pure intrinsic awareness and (2) spontaneously established appearances of clear light, you find in natural flow the fruit of the oceanic tantric scriptures of the Vajra Vehicle, find the finality of the experiential perspective of Mantra, and bring to fulfillment the confidence of conclusiveness.

Khetsun Sangpo: In accordance with the exceedingly secret class of quintessential instructions, you are introduced by the lama to self-cognition of essentially pure intrinsic awareness, and as attributes of this elimination of proliferations in the essential purity of emptiness there are spontaneous appearances of clear light. Within the undifferentiable union in one taste of essentially pure intrinsic awareness—emphasizing emptiness—and spontaneously established appearances of clear light, attributes of realization flow naturally of their own accord without any fixing up or adjustment. When you find this experiential perspective of the undifferentiable union of essentially pure intrinsic awareness and spontaneously established appearances of clear light together in one taste, you have found the fulfillment, the finality of the three inner classes of Mantra—Mahā, Anu, and Ati Yogas—and even within the last the unsurpassed features of the exceedingly secret class of quintessential instructions. You have gained the confidence of utter decisiveness regarding view of the Great Completeness.

*Objection:* It [absurdly] follows that the subject, these appearances that are signs of the clear light, either always exist or always do not exist because of being causeless appearances.

Khetsun Sangpo: Our own assertion is that appearances of empty forms are causeless; to challenge this the objector draws the unwanted conclusion that either those appearances would have to be either always present or never present, since their appearance does not depend on causes. The objector states our own assertion as the reason for this unwanted consequence.

*Response:* These [appearances of the clear light] do not have causes producing them because of being empty forms, like falling hairs.

Khetsun Sangpo: To someone with cataracts or other eye diseases, there are appearances that look like falling hairs.

This is like the statement that the ultimate emptiness (*stong nyid dam pa*) is newly produced.

Khetsun Sangpo: It is *said* that the ultimate emptiness is newly produced due to the fact that *understanding* of emptiness is newly produced by someone who had not manifestly experienced it earlier, but ultimate emptiness itself, being the primordial mode of abiding, could never be produced. Similarly, appearances of empty forms are *said* to be newly produced, whereas they actually are not.

*Objection:* Causes of these appearances do exist because mental conditions that make the self-effulgence of the clear light dawn exist. Are those causes of the appearances (*snang ba'i rgyu*) not producers of the appearances (*snang ba'i skyed byed*)?

Khetsun Sangpo: The objector thinks that there must be mental causes of the manifestation of the effulgence of clear light to a practitioner making these empty forms visible as objects of apprehension such that the practitioner knows that such-and-such has dawned.

*Response:* They are not, like the reflection of space in water, yielding the mistake that it is produced.

Khetsun Sangpo: For example, in a square vessel of clear water there appears to be a square sky, and in a round vessel of clear water there appears to be a round sky, but these are false impressions. The sky is in no way either square or round; these shapes are the shapes of the vessels, not of the sky.

*Objection:* Then, it must be that all phenomena are necessarily empty forms, mere appearances devoid of causes and conditions, like those [empty forms].

*Response:* When in that way one analyzes the meaning of reality, even all phenomena are in the end similar to empty forms—appearances of the nonexistent, baseless, and devoid of foundation because of being without production.

Khetsun Sangpo: When you analyze with reasoning examining the ultimate, all phenomena ranging from forms through to knowledge-of-all-aspects are appearances of the nonexistent, appearing while empty and empty while appearing, emptiness and appearances not being in distinct categories. Like empty forms, they are foundationless, since, after all, they are not produced.

*Objection:* It [absurdly] follows that all phenomena, aside from being mere manifest appearances of the nonexistent, are not feasible as mistake or non-mistake, existing as things or not existing as things.

Khetsun Sangpo: The objection is that there would be no help or harm from any phenomena.

*Response:* Ultimately, that is accepted. Conventionally, that consequence is not entailed, for, temporarily in the perspective of awarenesses, there is application of conventions as existing as effective things and not existing as effective things, but even in terms of such [conventions], empty forms are not established as [effective] things.

Hence, they do not come to be either always existent or always nonexistent because in connection with individual awarenesses they appear at certain times and at certain places.

*Objection:* If they appear that way, why would they not be impermanent?

*Answer:* If it is reasonable to assert that falling hairs are impermanent and are [effective] things, then assert that empty forms are too! If not, then these also are similar to those.

Khetsun Sangpo: If it is okay with you to assert that the falling hairs appearing to someone with cataracts are actual hairs that are impermanent and effective, then go ahead and also assert that empty forms are impermanent and create effects. If, as we say, it is not suitable to assert that those falling hairs can fulfill the role of actual hairs, then these empty forms also are similar in not being able to function as effective things.

*Objection:* If optical illusions from [ingesting] thorn-apple<sup>a</sup> (*thang khrom/ thang phrom, dhattūra*)<sup>b</sup> and falling hairs are mistaken appearances,

Khetsun Sangpo: When this herb is ingested, people become crazed and see all sorts of hallucinations.

how could they be similar to empty forms, which are necessarily appearances of the clear light and unmistakable pure appearances?

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<sup>a</sup> When this herb is ingested, people become crazed and see all sorts of hallucinations.

<sup>b</sup> *Datura metel* L.; a psychotropic herb, used as a poison also.



*Answer:* With regard to the ways that mistake and non-mistake are posited:

1. On the one hand, the positing of:

- an empty form that is a mere vivid appearance of the nonexistent as mistaken
- and an actual form as nonmistaken

is by way of whether in the perspective of a conventional awareness it can perform functions or not. Vivid appearances of the nonexistent, which are cases of appearing but not being able to perform functions, are described as “mistaken appearances” relative to those others [that can perform the functions that they appear to be able to perform].

Khetsun Sangpo: One way that mistake and nonmistake are posited is from the viewpoint of whether the thing in question is, in the perspective of a conventional awareness, able to perform the functions it appears to be able to do. Because a painting of a butter lamp cannot illuminate a room, relieving it of darkness, but an actual butter lamp can, the first is posited in the perspective of a conventional worldly awareness as mistaken in the sense that it appears one way but cannot perform those functions, whereas the second can perform those functions. Similarly, empty forms, being empty vivid appearances of the nonexistent, appear to be able to perform certain functions but cannot, and thus are called “mistaken appearances” relative to those objects that can. This is a difference between mental vivid appearances and sensory vivid appearances from a conventional perspective.

How are such mistaken? It is because falling hairs mistakenly appear to be hairs but are not established as hairs.

Khetsun Sangpo: It is like the fact that falling hairs appearing to someone due to an eye disease seem like hairs but cannot do what actual hairs do. Even though there are such seeming appearances, those falling hairs are found to be utterly nonexistent when they are analyzed.

2. On the other hand, ordinary appearances, produced by causes that are contaminated actions and afflictive emotions, are called “mistaken appearances” because they arise through the power of ignorance. The signs of the clear light, however, are called “pure appearances” that arise from the flow of the noumenon and are not produced by causal

afflictive emotions such as ignorance and so forth and by karmas accumulated through them, and hence their entities do not rely upon mistaken causes.

Khetsun Sangpo: Appearances to ordinary beings, that is to say, to non-yogis, are called “mistaken appearances” because except for appearing due to the force of ignorance, they do not exist in actuality. Empty forms, however, being signs, or appearances, of the clear light, arise from the flow, or capacity, of noumenal suchness and thus are not in the least infected with the foulness of unknowing, obscured ignorance and other afflictive emotions. Since they do not depend upon or have any connection with mistaken causes, but are appearances of the noumenon that has always existed and will always exist, they are pure and unmistaken.

Nevertheless, even appearances that are signs of the clear light of the noumenon could serve as a bases of mistake for an awareness that has them for its object if they are not recognized as empty forms that are self-appearances of the flow of the noumenon without I-ness and self-ness. There are many who initially make mistakes from the appearance of light and now likewise go astray on the path of Mantra, discriminating the shape and color [of empty forms] as things that have a physical and impermanent nature, like mistaking a rope for a snake.

Khetsun Sangpo: Empty forms are appearances that are signs, or demonstrations, of the ultimate mode of abiding, suchness, and need to be recognized this way—without any sense of self where there is no self, appearing and empty, empty and appearing, unlike compounded material phenomena. If you do not understand empty forms this way, even they can serve as bases for mistaking them to be impermanent physical phenomena with various colors and shapes.

Therefore, if you recognize all appearances as self-appearances [of the noumenon] and, while baseless and devoid of any root, as mere appearances having an unimpeded nature, then not any appearances of environments or beings in that environment—the internal and external factors of cyclic existence—can serve as a basis for mistake, like recognizing a speckled rope as a speckled rope, like a Buddha.

Khetsun Sangpo: If you mistake the appearance of a speckled rope for a snake, your misapprehension of it as a snake creates immeas-

urable fear, but when you recognize the speckled rope as a speckled rope, the fear of a snake becomes utterly nonexistent. In the same way, when you recognize the Buddha existing in yourself, you are immediately buddhafied.

Hence, in order to successfully become ripened for the completion-stage clear light replete with all aspects, you must be introduced to and identify self-knowing pristine wisdom. However, if you do not, then even though at the end of the three appearances a similitude of the clear light dawns, you will not be released from apprehended-object and apprehending-subject, but a subtle mind will be held to be the apprehender and the likes of space devoid of conditions will be held to be its object.

Khetsun Sangpo: If you do not identify your own self-knowing pristine wisdom, then after the disappearance of the white appearance, red/orange increase of appearance, and black near-attainment the clear light that dawns will not be the actual one but only somewhat similar to that. Since subtle mind will not have ceased, you will consider it to be the subject and consider this which is like empty space to be its object.

Therefore, how could such be the dawning of a fully qualified clear light! For, apprehended-object and apprehending-subject have not been stopped.

Khetsun Sangpo: Apprehending object and subject, outer and inner, how could this be the actual clear light? You will not have found the view beyond apprehended-object and apprehending-subject.

The great internal sphere of clear light, union of appearance and emptiness, indeed does not have restricted appearances as in “It is such-and-such,” but it is not without all-pervasive compassion endowed with all aspects, complete within unrestricted equality (*ris med mnyam pa'i ngang du rdzogs pa*), like the natural light of a crystal.

Khetsun Sangpo: Because the noumenal clear light dawns from within, it is called “the great internal sphere of clear light.” In it there are no cut-off appearances such as appear to our mistaken minds when we think “It is this,” “It is that.” Nevertheless, within this noumenal equality without such bifurcation it is not that fully aspected all-pervasive compassion is absent. Rather, it is like the self-light, or natural light, of a crystal in that when sunlight shines on a crystal, it immediately lets out its light externally, and thus even when it is not in sunlight, its light is integrally within it.

Consequently, it is necessary to understand that appearanceless emptiness and endowment with appearances are not contradictory.

In a Buddha's perception, for which the three times are equal and complete, all directions and times are complete in an instant, and hence a Buddha's exalted knowledge is inconceivable because it has been transformed. Although the natural clear light itself does not stir from an inconceivable nature in which the four times [past, present, future, and the equality of time] are equal and complete, in the perspective of those for whom things are split into times and directions—in the perspective of those who have not attained the final transformation of the subject [that is, mind]—there are varieties such as appearing and not appearing, vast and not vast, pure and impure, and so forth, but the basal nature does not become various. Hence, no matter whether you are mistaken, there is in fact no fluctuation from the context of the noumenon, but due to your own mind you experience the appearances of cyclic existence within being self-bound because of being mistaken with respect to self-appearances, like a dream. As is said:

Except for conceptuality,  
There is no cyclic existence at all.

Khetsun Sangpo: A Buddha's transformation of mind is such that a Buddha is capable of perceiving both the ultimate and the conventional, the various categories of conventionalities being purified in the sphere of reality. Hence, emptiness and appearance are not in separate categories, whereby a Buddha's perspective is beyond realization by common beings—inconceivable. For us ordinary beings, however, time is linear, and the directions are distinct.

The natural clear light itself does not pass beyond an inconceivable reality in which the four times—past, present, future, and the equality of time—are equal and complete in the sense that emptiness and appearance of reflections are compatible because the nature of reflections is emptiness. Thus, even though in terms of its mode of abiding the noumenal natural clear light does not stir from, fluctuate from, the inconceivable nature of equality and completeness, in the perspective of us ordinary beings for whom things are split into times and directions, that is to say, in the face of us who have not attained final transformation of the six collections of consciousness there are various appearances, such as pure and impure, these being our usual way of seeing things. Nevertheless, the primordial basal nature itself never changes into different

varieties. Therefore, no matter whether sentient beings are mistaken or not, the fundamental noumenal mode of abiding, in fact, never fluctuates.

Through being mistaken with respect to self-appearances, sentient beings chain themselves, whereby appearances of cyclic existence are experienced as in a dream. Even though, for instance, there are no hells, we mistake appearances of hells for actual hells and undergo immeasurable suffering of heat and cold from bad karma for long periods of time. Except for being experienced like in a dream, none of these appearances of cyclic existence—whether as a hell-being or hungry ghost or any other type of being—are established by direct valid cognition. Hence, experience of the appearances of cyclic existence such as the three bad transmigrations as hell-beings, hungry ghosts, and animals is due to our own mistaken mind. Except for being established through sentient beings' own conceptuality, there is no real cyclic existence at all, not even its name.

Therefore, not knowing that all phenomena are mere appearances—foundationless and rootless—conceptuality examines these modes of appearance, “This is an effective thing,” “This is a noneffective thing,” “This is self,” “This is other,” and so forth. Such conceptual appearances are mistaken appearances.

Khetsun Sangpo: All sorts of good and bad appearances dawn to mistaken mind, to conceptuality. What is the basis from which they appear? Because they dawn from the noumenon, the sphere of reality, when you look into and delineate the basis from which they dawn, you see that the basis of their appearance, except for being empty, is foundationless, rootless, merely appearing adventitiously and temporarily like bubbles coming forth from water. Since all sorts of modes of appearance dawn from the sphere of reality, mistaken mind—conceptuality—being limited to the phenomena of apprehended-object and apprehending-subject does not understand their lack of foundation and their merely adventitious and manifest arising; so it distinguishes these modes of appearance, which are actually just like water bubbles from water, and thinks that these bubble-like appearances probably exist, marking them out as “This is an effective thing, that is a non-effective thing, this is self, that is other,” and so forth, stuck in worldly appearances. All of these are mistaken impressions.

When you investigate rightly, [you understand that appearances] meet back to the noumenal natural clear light that is the original basal mode of abiding, whereupon the mistake vanishes into the basis. As the *Kalachakra Tantra* says, “This from which the three existences arise in all ways is that into which these again dissolve, O Lord of Humans”; mistake is from within the equality of no-I and no-self.

Khetsun Sangpo: When we analyze properly what these modes of appearance are and are not and investigate well the noumenon, the empty mode of abiding of all phenomena, which is the continually existent primordial basal mode of abiding, we discover—delineating it by reading texts, analytical reasoning, and meditation—that its inner nature is intensely clear light, noumenal clear light. In dependence upon discovering this, all mistaken appearances dissolve into the basal sphere of reality, like clouds dissolving into the sphere of the sky.

As the *Kālachakra Tantra* says, due to mistaken modes of appearance sentient beings wander through all types of the three existences—the desire, form, and formless realms. Where do all these dissolve? They melt in the basal mode of abiding. Though mistaken appearances of the three existences dawn, they do not at all pass beyond this sphere of reality, like dream appearances. For example, consider the case of two people, one of whom falls asleep and undergoes all sorts of anguish, even of hells, and cries out, whereas the other one, not having fallen asleep and seeing the person squirm from bad dreams, causes the fellow to wake up, at which point all of those awful events are understood as just the mistaken appearances of a dream: “I was so frightened, it was just a dream!” On awakening, all of the mistaken dream appearances immediately dissolve and are finished. Similarly, though we wander in the three types of cyclic existence, in the end all these appearances dissolve into the basal empty noumenon.

Even though there is no mistake within the mode of abiding itself, when appearances come forth from it, we become mistaken about them. For instance, we are all people who hold onto a conception that the “I,” the self, exists, but when we look into it, ultimately such an “I” does not exist at all.

Although these are just mistaken appearances, when we are told that the self, ourselves, do not exist, then since we are all just people who conceive “I,” we immediately think we would just be like earth and rock. We think that if there were no agent, there

could not be any consciousness—luminous cognition—but just matter composed of physical particles. It appears to our minds that the nonexistence of self could not possibly be right. However, all of these types of thoughts dawn from mistaken appearances; they are just modes of apprehending the erroneous. When mistaken appearances are investigated and delineated, “I” and self are known to be utterly nonexistent, like the nonexistence of a snake in a rope.

Although there is no mistake, not even a speck, in the sameness of the noumenal mode of abiding, nevertheless when appearances dawn from that noumenon, they are mistaken. This is how the appearances of cyclic existence arise.

The mistake occurs upon apprehending as apprehended-object and apprehending-subject the self-effulgence of the noumenon dawning in external manifestations.

Khetsun Sangpo: The noumenon, the primordial basal mode of abiding, is like a crystal. When a crystal is not struck by sunlight, for instance, it does not cast forth light, but when the light of the sun hits a crystal, it can cast light strongly in various ways, even at a great distance. Similarly, because the noumenon of the mind—a primordially abiding Buddha—exists within us but is covered with the shell of the body, when we engage in hearing, thinking, and meditating, then like sunlight these conditions allow these inner attributes to become manifest externally. Our own light dawns in external manifestation, but due to fact that we have not been identified our own primordial mode of abiding from having become accustomed to mistake over many lives, we mistakenly think that there is light over there in the distance that is shining, and there is an internal subject, a consciousness, that is apprehending it. This misapprehension of subject and object is how we fall into the mistake of cyclic existence.

Since there is primordially no error in the noumenon, by setting within the natural flow of the noumenon all adventitious mistakes vanish in the basis, as was indicated in detail earlier.

Khetsun Sangpo: Appearances are projected from the noumenon, and seeing them, we think that there is an object on one side and we are subjects on the other side, not understanding that these are just the self-effulgence of intrinsic awareness. However, through setting within the natural flow of inconceivable reality with taut

mindfulness and introspection, all of these temporary mistakes vanish in the basis, since there is primordially no error in the noumenon.

How do you become set in the natural flow of the noumenon? In his *Treasury of the Sphere of Reality* (*chos dbyings mdzod*) Long-chen-pa uses clear water as an example. In a small, very clear, undisturbed pool of water you can see everything in the water, whether small stones of various colors, grass growing in it, or the like. You might think that if you took a stick and stirred it up, you would see everything even deeper down, but this would only make a mess such that you could not see anything. In the same way, when you leave the basally abiding mode of abiding as it is and sustain its self-flow with its natural effulgence without disturbing the natural flow with the stick of conceptuality, you will realize the mode of abiding of all phenomena without difficulty. This is because your own conceptuality is what makes it difficult.

It takes a long time for disturbed water to settle down, whereas when you are set in the self-flow of the noumenon, you are set within the noumenal primordial mode of abiding, a Buddha's body of attributes, the basal mode of abiding, unpolluted by the defilements of mistake like clear water, spontaneously endowed with all grand attributes. Though this is the basic nature of reality, when it is not recognized, conceptuality covers it up, obstructing it, but through setting in the self-flow of the noumenon, all of these adventitious errors vanish in the basis itself.

In our usual state without mindfulness and introspection, we do not notice that conceptuality is always being generated because we have become involved and lodged in it. Rather, decide with strong mindfulness and introspection to look at what conceptions appear. Just notice, as if from the side, which ones are dawning, such as, "Today I'll go to town; I'll go to such-and-such a store," "I'll say such-and-such to so-and-so," "I'll do this and that," and on and on.

When you look at these conceptions this way, you cannot identify any particular causes and conditions for them—it is not as if you made preparations for them. They just pop up adventitiously, the one after the other, a chain of thoughts, but if you look at that from which they arise, investigating the nature of the mind, you will vividly notice that they manifestly arise from within the empty noumenon of the mind. All you need is taut mindfulness and introspection, nothing else.



It can be difficult to recognize such adventitious phenomena. Why? Like a stream, conceptions are produced one after another, uninterruptedly, dissolving one after another. For example, we tend to consider a river just to be a river, whereas every moment the water is moving, moving. But in our sight last year's river and the present river are just the "river." Because the earlier river continues till now, a single name seems to cover it all; however, that is not how it actually is—day and night over the six periods of a single day, moments of the river are produced and produced and cease and cease. In the same way, with regard to our conceptions, as the former ones cease, later ones are produced and produced without a break—the chain of cyclic existence, running continuously, without any foundation that you could point out, just arising adventitiously.

Why do they not have any root, any causes and conditions that could be pointed out? These adventitious conceptions rise in projective prowess from within the noumenon of your own mind, the inconceivable mode of abiding, and because we do not recognize them as its projective prowess, we come under the control of conceptuality, and due to this involve ourselves solely in the senseless work of cyclic existence in life after life. But when they are recognized for what they are, they vanish in that basal reality from which they rose—the most peaceful noumenon. When conceptions arise, they arise from that; when they dissolve, they dissolve into that.

The path of *sūtra* is to infer such noumenal clear light—this emptiness endowed with all supreme aspects—and thereupon to cultivate it in meditation by way of mental analysis. The delineation of it by way of direct perception is the completion-stage of Mantra.

Khetsun Sangpo: In the *Sūtra* system, you realize by way of inference the basally abiding inconceivable noumenon of luminosity, the emptiness endowed with all supreme aspects, which from the viewpoint of its factor of emptiness is the same as the Middle Way view of the thorough pacification of all proliferations. This voidness of proliferations is taken as the aim of inference through engagement in analysis, like understanding that there is fire up on a high pass due to the fact that you have directly seen billowing smoke there. The perception of billowing smoke with your own eyes and then remembering the concomitance of the presence of

smoke with the presence of fire, yields a valid cognition understanding that fire is present up there even though you are not seeing it directly with your eyes. Similarly, even though you are not directly seeing the profound emptiness, the pacification of all proliferations, emptiness endowed with all supreme aspects, as it exactly is, you are able to induce ascertainment of it through inference into the mode of eliminating all proliferations. That is the path of Sūtra.

However, in the completion-stage of Mantra you do not have to rely on inferential valid cognition. Why? Because, unlike inference of the presence of fire in which you do not know whether it is a fire in the forest, or in a cleared place, or a house burning, in the completion-stage of Mantra you understand the actual situation, like going to the pass and seeing the fire directly.

Nevertheless, even within the completion-stage there are differences in speed due to differences in proximity—distant and close—and hence the difference is being *like* direct perception and being fully qualified direct perception.

Even in Sūtra in the middle wheel of doctrine a mere union of (1) the emptiness of inherent existence and (2) dependently arisen appearances is delineated with respect to all phenomena,

Khetsun Sangpo: The middle wheel of doctrine of signlessness is comprised by the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras (vast, middle-length, and brief) and so forth. It teaches a union of emptiness and appearance that are not newly conjoined but have existed primordially.

but it is not mentioned that there are self-appearing divine bodies and pristine wisdom that are the self-arisen clear light, which are not produced by causes—karma and afflictive emotions.

Khetsun Sangpo: Naturally appearing divine bodies are the spontaneous self-effulgence of noumenal clear light, in which all appearances are divine bodies, all thoughts are the sport of pristine wisdom—entirely pure in nature.

Therefore, [in the middle wheel of doctrine] exalted bodies and pristine wisdom are created presently by causes, but since mere realization of emptiness, or the noumenon, cannot do this, it is asserted that the collections [of merit and wisdom] are completed by way of great compassion.

Khetsun Sangpo: Because the middle wheel mode of progressing

on the path does not speak of self-arisen, luminous, self-appearing divine bodies and pristine wisdom, it is asserted that divine bodies and pristine wisdom must be fundamentally created by causes. This means that the two collections of merit and wisdom must first be accumulated so as to purify defilements, and through these causes Buddhahood is achieved. Furthermore, since mere realization of emptiness is not sufficient to accomplish this, it is by way of cultivating great compassion and engaging in its attendant deeds that the collections of merit and wisdom are completed.

The final wheel of doctrine teaches that since the noumenon of the mind, that very sphere of reality, is primordially not separate from appearances of exalted bodies and of pristine wisdom, all sentient beings are pervaded by the lineage of the Great Vehicle, the matrix-of-One-Gone-to-Bliss, and hence it teaches that all sentient beings are suitable to become buddhified.

Khetsun Sangpo: What is the mode of delineating the view in the final wheel of doctrine, the wheel of good differentiation? The final wheel of doctrine teaches that the noumenon of your mind primordially is naturally and spontaneously endowed with divine bodies and wisdom, whereas in the middle wheel of doctrine, the wheel of signlessness, such is not taught so clearly. Since all sentient beings, even bugs, are suffused with the matrix-of-One-Gone-to-Bliss as a fundamental constituent, all beings whatsoever definitely are capable of becoming enlightened.

However, it teaches that [the appearance of exalted bodies and pristine wisdom] depends upon causes—that is to say, the two collections are achieved as causes making these manifest.

Khetsun Sangpo: The matrix-of-One-Gone-to-Bliss that exists within the continuums of all sentient beings is presently obstructed by afflictive emotions and actions driven by those afflictive emotions such that persons do not know that it is there, like a treasure under the dirt floor of a beggar's hovel. For it to be revealed, the final wheel of doctrine teaches that it is necessary to accumulate the collections of merit and wisdom.

Merit is accumulated by activities such as making offerings upward to the Three Jewels, making gifts to those in less fortunate circumstances, and maintaining pure morality. The collection of wisdom is accumulated by constantly meditating on the profound mode of abiding—a nature of emptiness and dependent-arising

undifferentiable in entity. Dependent on accumulating the apprehendable collection of merit and the unapprehendable collection of wisdom without the one becoming separated from the other, the nonmanifest matrix-of-One-Gone-to-Bliss will become manifest.

According to the descriptions in Sūtra in the middle and final wheels of doctrine, those of sharp faculties gradually purify defilements over three periods of countless great eons, this being the fastest way to achieve the body of attributes and form bodies of a Buddha—the first period of countless great eons occurring on the paths of accumulation and preparation, the second on the first seven impure Bodhisattva grounds, and the third on the final three pure Bodhisattva grounds (the eighth, ninth, and tenth grounds). This is no small amount of time, since the term “countless” means a number with fifty zeros, which then is one period countless great eons, and it takes three of these at the fastest. Our Teacher, Shākyamuni Buddha, having accumulated the collections of merit and wisdom, thereby purifying defilements for three periods of countless great eons, tamed the demons at dusk in Bodhi Gaya under the bodhi tree, then remained in meditative equipoise at night, and at dawn became fully enlightened. Those of middling faculties, however, have to accumulate the collections of merit and wisdom for ten periods of countless eons, and the lowest among those having the lineage of the Great Vehicle have to do so for thirty-three eons. This is what the *Descent into Laṅkā Sūtra* says.

Though when we utter the term “countless eons” from our mouths, it might seem as if this could readily be accomplished, but consider what it would take to implement actual practice even for one such period! Take a look at how we are spending our own lives. We have a wonderful human life endowed with the leisure and fortunate circumstances for practice, and we have met with the Buddha’s precious and special teaching such that we could achieve the state of union of pure body and pure mind in one lifetime in one body. Yet while understanding how to do this, we are distracted to the fleeting appearances of this life—trying to make ourselves comfortable, concerned about our job—such that when we consider how much time during a day we are spending with the affairs of this lifetime and how much time we are putting into something deeper that, at minimum, would improve future lifetimes, there might only be a few moments that we could say are actually going toward religious practice. It is almost the same as not practicing. That is why we see no signs of accomplishment.

In Mantra, Buddhahood is manifested merely through realizing such a primordially pure Buddha maṇḍala—abiding naturally and spontaneously.

Khetsun Sangpo: The unsurpassed tantras of the Vajra Vehicle clearly speak of a primordially pure body of attributes as abiding naturally and spontaneously within. Mere realization of this indwelling nature brings about manifestation of Buddhahood, without needing to seek it separately by accumulating the collections of merit and wisdom.

Despite the fact that during this period the Buddhist religion is deteriorating, the transformative compassionate blessings of the Buddha's word are getting stronger and stronger, not weaker, such that as soon as you are introduced to your own indwelling noumenon, you are able to take the fruit as the path, manifesting Buddha attributes. Thus, in the unsurpassed Secret Vajra Vehicle it is not at all necessary to accumulate the collections of merit and wisdom for three periods of countless great eons; it is not necessary to create a new Buddhahood through causes; rather, by being introduced to the basally abiding body of attributes, in one instant you manifest what is already within you.

In terms of the Path of Method, Mantra teaches a completion-stage involving constructs in which you enter into the Mantric suchness of clear light of your own mind, not having to separately seek out a newly arisen Buddha achieved by causes.

Khetsun Sangpo: Even in the completion-stage of the Path of Method, the completion-stage with constructs, the compassionate Buddha taught a method that does not rely on achieving a new Buddha that is an effect of preceding causes; rather, the Path of Method teaches a path for directly entering into the clear light noumenon, the suchness, of your own mind exactly as it is.

The Great Completeness teaches the final path of direct perception, which involves the essentials of:

- being introduced to and identifying self-arisen pristine wisdom—naturally and spontaneously established—in its self-flow, and
- permeation of appearances that are signs of the clear light of the clear light in self-luminosity.

Khetsun Sangpo: Superior even to the Path of Method is the Secret Mantra Great Completeness that teaches a path introducing you to the basally abiding noumenon, an undifferentiability of the basic

state and the fruit state, identifying in its own natural flow the self-arisen pristine wisdom spontaneously established in the basal nature within yourself. By merely identifying clear light pristine wisdom in its self-flow, appearances that are signs of the clear light of the noumenal clear light that exists within you dawn pervasively in self-luminosity. For example, when the sky dawns and the sun shines, all forms of darkness are simultaneously destroyed, and a white appearance pervades everywhere, and in the same way all factors of our unknowing beclouded ignorance are destroyed by the all-pervasive, noumenal, self-luminous light of pristine wisdom, whereby all of the five paths and ten grounds are instantaneously brought to completion.

Thereby it brings about arrival at finality, called “exalted body of pristine wisdom, completion of the two great collections, exalted body of the ultimate sphere of reality.”

Khetsun Sangpo: The final fruit of the path of the Great Completeness, which is an undifferentiability of the basic state and the fruit state, is a body of pristine wisdom in which the two great collections of merit and wisdom are complete, called “exalted body of the ultimate sphere of reality.”

In brief, this called a “sentient being” is merely a mistaking of self-appearances from the luminous sphere of reality.

Khetsun Sangpo: To bring all this together: Where does a sentient being come from? How does a sentient being arise? This called a “sentient being” comes from adventitiously mistaking what are actually self-appearances from the inconceivable clear light of the empty sphere of reality, deludedly lost in cyclic existence.

In the Cause Vehicle it is said that:

In the perspective of such mistaken appearance virtues that help and sins that harm indeceivably exist.

Khetsun Sangpo: In the mistaken perspective of sentient beings like us, enacting virtues such as worshipping and making offerings upward to the Three Jewels and making gifts downward to bad transmigrations definitely helps us, and committing nonvirtues such as the ten nonvirtues (the three physical nonvirtues of killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct; the four verbal nonvirtues of lying, divisive talk, harsh speech, and senseless chatter; and the three mental nonvirtues of covetousness, harmful intent, and

wrong views) or the five deeds of immediate retribution (killing one's father, killing one's mother, killing a Foe Destroyer, with bad intention causing blood to flow from the body of a Buddha, and causing dissension in the Spiritual Community) ineluctably and undeniably harm us. In the scope of mistaken appearances, virtues and nonvirtues that are mistaken appearances are performed, and those virtues and nonvirtues that are mistaken appearances inevitably and ineluctably yield help and harm within mistaken appearances.

In dependence upon the existence of those, the meritorious and the nonmeritorious exist. Through the force of those, the abandonment of ill-deeds and achievement of great powerful waves of virtuous practices is called "the collection of merit." Through that merit you temporarily achieve the factors of pleasure and goodness of gods, humans, and Bodhisattvas and finally achieve Form Bodies. That which is nonmistaken through realizing the noumenon of things is pristine wisdom.

Khetsun Sangpo: Although the etymology of pristine wisdom (*ye shes*) is "primordially knowing" (*ye nas shes pa*), here in the context of the collection of pristine wisdom it is undistorted correct realization of the mode of abiding of things, their unmistaken noumenon, such that all mistake is completely abandoned.

Through it you abandon the two obstructions and thereupon achieve the fruit, the body of attributes.

Khetsun Sangpo: Through the collection of pristine wisdom, you completely abandon the two obstructions—the afflictive obstructions preventing liberation from cyclic existence and the obstructions to omniscience—whereby you achieve the final fruit, the body of attributes of a Buddha. Thus, in the Cause Vehicle it is through the collections of merit and pristine wisdom as causes that the fruits of the two bodies of a Buddha, form body and body of attributes, are achieved.

In the Mantra Vehicle when you delineate the original nature of clear light just as it is, mistaken appearances release themselves, whereby you realize that objects that would be helped by virtues or harmed by ill deeds do not exist, being primordially pure.

Khetsun Sangpo: According to the Secret Mantra Vajra Vehicle,

when you are able to come to unmistakable conclusiveness regarding the noumenal clear light that is the original basal mode of abiding, mistaken appearances undergo self-release like a knotted snake releasing itself—mistaken appearances being freed by mistaken appearances themselves. You realize that phenomena are primordially pure, including anyone who might be helped by virtue or harmed by nonvirtue.

You have realization of pristine wisdom with capacities for completion, ripening, and purification partially similar to one who has attained forbearance with respect to the doctrine of non-production, and therefore although you do not *intentionally* help, spontaneously established great exalted activities enter others who have not realized such.

Khetsun Sangpo: Those who have this realization do not need to engage in helpful actions the way we do upon deliberate intention; nevertheless, altruistic activities affect sentient beings through the power of spontaneously established beneficial attributes. Thus, by realizing such pristine wisdom, the final fruit, it is not necessary to resort to the hardship of accumulating the collections of merit and wisdom and purifying obstructions for many countless eons as prior causes for achieving the fruit; rather, you have something that can substitute for this in an easy way—there is no need to wait for countless eons.

Thereby the two collections are completed in the manner of spontaneous establishment and the two exalted bodies are completed in the manner of spontaneous establishment. Mistake having been purified in the basis, you attain exertionless compassion continuously operating through its own force in lands equal to space. Hence, although it is not necessary to accumulate the collections through intentional exertion, you have a substitutional equivalent of striving at the great waves of the two collections for as many eons as there are particles of land.

Khetsun Sangpo: With the self-release of the spontaneously established nature, all beneficial attributes are complete in spontaneous establishment without need for exertion at the collections of merit and wisdom for such a long period of time. Through seeing, or recognizing, the noumenon existing within yourself, you have an equivalent of completing the entirety of the two collections—just by seeing this pristine wisdom.



*Also someone objects:* It [absurdly] follows that since these appearances that are signs of the clear light do not have any causes producing them, they are not produced.

*Response:* We accept [that those appearances that are signs of the clear light are not produced].

*Objection:* It [absurdly] follows that even the appearances do not exist.

*Response:* Why?

*Counter-response:* Because of not being produced.

*Response:* There is no contradiction in not being produced and yet appearing because appearance while not being produced exists naturally (*chos nyid kyis yod pa*) since all phenomena in the end are such,

Khetsun Sangpo: In the finality of the view, all phenomena appear while not being produced.

and this is established by reasoning. Therefore, the statement, “If something is not produced, how could it appear?” is reduced to being a debate within not knowing nature, like asking, “Why is fire hot?”

Khetsun Sangpo: The opponent’s saying, “If something is not produced, how could it appear?” is senseless, because it like asking why is fire hot, or why is water wet. It is just naturally so. To ask such questions about what is naturally so shows signs of not knowing the procedures of scripture and reasoning.

There is no debate about its being naturally established that [things], while empty, appear.

Khetsun Sangpo: When you consider appearance and emptiness, all phenomena included within cyclic existence and nirvāṇa appear while being empty and are empty while appearing. In terms of emptiness and appearance they cannot be separated into categories.

If your thought is that:

If something appears to be produced, it is contradictory for it to be nonproduced, and if something is not produced, it is contradictory for it to appear to be produced.

then if everything that appears to be produced would have production, there would not be even a single phenomenon that is without production.

Khetsun Sangpo: If it were the case that there is nothing that is

without production, then the ultimate would not exist.

And if whatever is without production could not appear to be produced, then all phenomena that are without production would be like the child of a barren woman. Hence, noncontradiction between the two truths would never occur, and consequently all paths of Sūtra and Mantra would be senseless.

Khetsun Sangpo: According to the objector's idea, there would be no way for conventional truths and ultimate truths to be noncontradictory and one taste. The objector simply has not understood how there could be a union of the two truths—that there is no contradiction between the conventional appearances that we directly perceive being produced and ceasing and the empty ultimate devoid of production, abiding, and cessation—and thinks that these two are only contradictory. If such a union did not exist, then studying it would not yield any understanding and, beyond this, all of the special understandings of the union of the two truths—the noncontradiction of appearance and emptiness—in the Sūtra and the Mantra paths would be meaningless.

Therefore, although empty forms do not have causes producing them, it is not that there are no causes of the *appearance* of these empty reflections, which are appearances of the nonexistent, as was explained above (118).

Khetsun Sangpo: These reflections of the inconceivable noumenon that is a union of emptiness and appearance do not have causes *producing* them, but because these empty yet appearing reflections dawn, they require a complement of causes and conditions for their appearance. For example, for a reflection to appear in a mirror you need a clean clear mirror.

*Question:* Are these causes that bring about the appearance of empty forms, which are empty appearances of the nonexistent, dependent-arising?

*Answer:* They are. They are subtle dependent-arising of the transitioning of the three appearances.

Khetsun Sangpo: The three appearances are the subtle minds mentioned above: the vivid white appearance, the vivid red or orange increase of appearance, and the black near-attainment, and thus this is a subtle dependent-arising. Their transitioning (*'pho ba*) is their unfolding in dependence upon each other.

*Question:* What contradiction would there be in describing these [subtle dependent-arisings] as causes producing [empty forms] and as dependent productions, and calling all these appearances momentary?

*Answer:* Indeed, there would be no contradiction if these [three appearances] are *designated* as what gives rise to and what produces [appearances of empty forms], but if you hold these [empty forms] to be effective things as in the assertion that a sprout produced from a seed is an effective thing, even all appearances of the nonexistent, such as reflections and so forth, would be effective things—there would not be even one among the entire scope of appearances that is not truly established.<sup>a</sup>

Khetsun Sangpo: If empty forms were actual effective things, then since the definition of an effective thing is “that which is able to perform a function,” all appearances would have to be able to perform the functions of the objects they appear to be, in which case even a reflection in a mirror of a delicious meal would be edible or a reflection of a girl or boy would be able to perform the functions of an actual girl or boy.

Hence, [these topics] are expressed within making distinctions. All restricted appearances do not pass beyond dependent-arising; nevertheless, you must understand that although empty forms dawn in varieties, they are not established as various. This is due to [differences between] the mode of abiding and the mode of appearance, like the fact that although due [differences in] vessels the shape of space appears variously, it is not necessary to assert that space is impermanent.

Khetsun Sangpo: Empty forms dawn, or appear, as if they are various, but in actuality they are not various. For example, in a square vessel of water the sky seems to be square, but in a round vessel of water it seems to be round, and in a triangular vessel it appears to be triangular, but is the sky square, round, or triangular? No. It does not change from being the one to being the other. Dependent on the shape of the vessel, it appears to be one way or the other, but in terms of its mode of abiding it is always the same. Thus, a distinction has to be made between how it appears and how it abides.

The unrestricted noumenon in which the four times are equal and complete is—in its own entity—not posited as a dependently arisen appearance; like

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<sup>a</sup> At this point the group teaching at the UMA Institute for Tibetan Studies ended, but continued privately with Jeffrey Hopkins.

space, it is not dependently arisen, and it is also beyond dependently imputed conventions.

Khetsun Sangpo: There is a serial layout of four times—past, present, future, and the equality of time—as if these are distinct, but in fact all four are not serial, one before the other. In terms of the entity of the noumenon itself there are no dependently arisen appearances, because dependent-arising is the mode of establishment of conventionalities, whereas the entity of the noumenon itself is beyond dependent-arising. Unlike dependently arisen appearances, which are established in the context of mutual relationship, the entity of the noumenon itself is empty and immutable, like space, beyond even the vocabulary of the range of conventional appearances.

You must understand that although restricted appearances incontrovertibly are indeed dependent-arisings, self-arisen clear light does not become nonexistent if dependent-arisings do not exist, and hence the great emptiness, the noumenon, the element of attributes, and the sphere of luminosity are not dependent-arisings. If they were dependent-arisings, they would not be uncontrived, fundamental; they would be contrived, newly arisen by causes and conditions.

Khetsun Sangpo: The great emptiness, the emptiness that is the basal mode of abiding, is not a dependently arisen phenomenon; it is the noumenon beyond phenomena. If it were a dependent-arising, then since dependent-arisings are temporary and relative to one another, it would have to be adventitious and could not be fundamental and uncontrived and thus could not be the immutable noumenon. It would be newly fabricated, made, dependent on the power of causes and conditions, like the existence of a right horn dependent on the existence of a left horn.

Although the sphere of great clear light, equal and complete, exists as an inconceivable nature,

Khetsun Sangpo: It is not that the sphere of great clear light does not exist, but it does not exist like a magician's illusions as conventionalities do. It exists beyond thoughts and conceptions such as appearing or not appearing, beyond all polarity.

it is not dependently arisen since it does not exist as an object in the sphere of the conventions of object dawned and agent of dawning and in the

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sphere of apprehended-object and apprehending-subject and is beyond the poles of appearing, not appearing, and so forth.



## 7. Pristine Wisdom Dwelling in the Body

Also, the statement by one Wa-mang Ge-she<sup>a</sup> of the latter day new faction:

Inside the hearts of Nyingmas is a Buddha; in the lungs is a sentient being; these two go back and forth on those pathways.

which he has broadcast as being an unreasonable, amazing account is reduced to being a case of not understanding that while claiming himself to be wise, he displays genuine signs of stupidity.

Khetsun Sangpo: Though from pride he fancies himself to be a great scholar, in fact he himself demonstrates that he does not comprehend anything about the inconceivable noumenon or the profound tantras.

This originally was the wrong conception of Dri-gung Pal-dzin (*'bri gung dpal 'dzin*).

Khetsun Sangpo: It is not that Wa-mang Ge-she developed this wrong idea from his own reflections; rather, it was put forth in the past by Dri-gung Pal-dzin, who refuted Nyingmas. His wrong views, in turn, were thoroughly refuted by the omniscient Longchen-pa, Nga-ri Paṇ-chen Padma-wang-gyal, the Fifth Dalai Lama, and so forth to the point where all talk of them disappeared. However, Wa-mang Ge-she dug out this old account and considered it to be an amazing great reasoning, without realizing that he was revealing his own stupidity.

Dri-gung Pal-dzin refuted Nyingma at length. Once when he was together with many of his students, a terrific wind blew up, thundering like an earthquake; his students were so frightened they fled the area. Pal-dzin, however, did not flee, whereupon the ground underneath him opened up and caved in, and he, without dying, sunk into the ground. Nga-ri Paṇ-chen Padma Wang-gyal wrote about how Dri-gung Pal-dzin ferociously refuted Nyingma

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<sup>a</sup> This is the Ge-lug-pa scholar Wal-mang Kön-chog-gyal-tshan (*dbal mang dkon mchog rgyal mtshan*, 1764-1853). The book is likely his *sa rnying bka' brgyud sogs kyi khyad par mgo smos tsam mu to 'i rgyangs 'bod kyi tshul du bya gtong snyan sgron bdud rtsi 'i bsangs gtor*, in *gsung 'bum (dkon mchog rgyal mtshan)*, TBRC W1KG1132.6:219-346 ([s.l.]: [dga' ldan chos 'khor gling], [n.d.]); Collected Works of Dbal-maṅ Dkon-mchog-rgyal-mtshan, vol. 6 (*cha*), 216-342 (New Delhi: Gyeltan Gelek Namgyal, 1974); thanks to Gene Smith for the suggestion.

and thereby accumulated inconceivable sins of deriding the doctrine and ended up sinking into the earth; the story was so unbelievable that some subsequent followers went to see the area, but when they arrived there, it was so awful they could not stand looking at it.

He said:

In Vimala's *Heart Drop* (*snying thig*)<sup>a</sup> it is said  
That the mind dwells inside the lungs,  
Intrinsic awareness is inside the heart,  
And inside the lungs is a divine body, the size of a mere mustard seed!  
Such is the doctrinal system of [non-Buddhist] Forders.

Khetsun Sangpo: The root of Dri-gung Pal-dzin's refutation is a statement in Vimalamitra's *Heart Drop* that mind (*sems*) dwells in the lungs, intrinsic awareness dwells inside the heart, and inside the lungs is a divine body. Dri-gung Pal-dzin newly added that the divine body is the size of a mere mustard seed to make this doctrine look like the non-Buddhist Sāṃkhya assertion of a Person, pure consciousness, inside the heart, and with such wrong ideas of deprecation and superimposition Dri-gung Pal-dzin refuted Nyingma. Wa-mang Geshe later repeated this to refute Nyingma.

It is a source of laughter that while you, Wa-mang, have not even formed understanding of the mere meaning of the terms "mind" (*sems*) and "sentient being" (*sems can*), you assert that you will refute others!

Khetsun Sangpo: Not able to differentiate between the terms themselves and the meanings of "mind" (*sems*) and "sentient being" (*sems can*), Wal-mang Kön-chog-gyal-tshan is in an awful predicament, but despite this he seeks to refute others. It is simply embarrassing to pretend to refute others without having understood the procedures of reasoning.

How? Whereas what is being explained is that the mind mounted on karmic winds dwells in the lungs and that pristine wisdom, mounted on pristine wind, abides in the heart, it is laughable to understand these as two persons—a fully qualified sentient being in the lungs and a fully qualified Buddha in the heart.

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<sup>a</sup> Vimalamitra (*bi ma la mi tra*), *man ngag nges pa'i kha byang ming rnam par bkod pa*, in *bka' ma rgyas pa*, TBRC W19229.45:139-146 (Kalimpong, w.b.: Dupjung Lama, 1982-1987).



Khetsun Sangpo: Indeed, according to tantras in both the Old Translation and New Translation orders there is a mind mounted on the karmic winds circulating in the lungs; this is a mind, not a sentient being. The karmic winds circulating in the lungs are like a wild horse on which the mind, like a cripple, is mounted. Pristine wisdom, on the other hand, is mounted on a primordial wind (*ye rlung*) dwelling in the life-channel in the heart, whereby it functions; it also is a mind, not a sentient being. Wal-mang Kön-chog-nyal-tshan, not having understood this, thinks that Nyingma-pas are saying that two beings exist in the continuum of one person—an actual sentient being moving about in the lungs, and an actual Buddha endowed with the thirty-two signs and eighty beauties moving about in the heart. His misunderstanding is simply laughable. No one says, for instance, that a cow with horns has a cow with horns inside its lungs! Making a mistake like this is very strange.

When the term “sentient being” is used, it indicates a person in whom a mind exists, like “one having eyes” (*mig ldan*).

What illogicality is there in a mind dwelling in the lungs?

Khetsun Sangpo: There is nothing illogical or contradictory about a mind dwelling in the lungs. This can be explained through the route of scientific descriptions of the circulation of blood in vessels just as it can through what is explained in the *Roots Tantras* of the Tibetan medical system, as well as through the descriptions in the generation-stage of Mantra about the relationship of consciousness with the movement of winds in channels. There is nothing strange about such an assertion, whereas this mistaking of mind (*sems*) for sentient being (*sems can*) is indeed strange. None of these sources says that there is a fully qualified sentient being moving about in the lungs, whereas there is nothing strange about an empty mind being in the lungs.

That a mind dwells in the lungs is like the explanation by others too that the five consciousnesses riding on the five branch winds move in the five sense powers—such as the eye consciousness dwelling in the eyes and seeing forms, and so forth.

Khetsun Sangpo: For instance, Buddhists, whether Nyingma or not, hold that an eye consciousness seeing colors and shapes dwells in the sense organs of the eyes. If they find it strange that a mind dwells in the lungs, they should find it strange that a visual

consciousness dwells in the eyes!

According to you, there would be six sentient beings of dissimilar type at individual places in the body of a single creature—one sentient being seeing forms who is inside the eyes, another sentient being hearing sounds who is inside the ears, and so on.

Khetsun Sangpo: Would Wa-mang Ge-she want to say that inside the eye there a sentient being seeing colors and shapes, then in the ear another sentient being hearing sounds, and likewise another in the nose, and yet another in the tongue, and again another in the body? Not just a mind in each of those places but a sentient being? Maybe one would look like a snake, another like a horned animal? This is what his position forces him to accept.

Not only that, but also since even each conceptual consciousness is a mind, you have to assert that there are countless sentient beings of dissimilar type in a single body

Khetsun Sangpo: Since conceptual consciousnesses arise moment by moment, there are a large number of them, such that even in an hour or two there would absurdly have to be hundreds of sentient beings coming and going during that period.

and that sentient beings as many as the consciousnesses that are mounted on the 21,600 winds dwelling in the final hair-pores of the body.<sup>a</sup>

Similarly, that pristine wisdom dwells in the body can be understood merely from endless scriptures that speak of this;

Khetsun Sangpo: There is nothing strange about pristine wisdom dwelling in the body, as is evidenced by statements in the *Kālachakra Tantra* and *Hevajra Tantra*, which are accepted by all Tibetan schools, whether old or new, as being genuine and authoritative.

for instance, the *Glorious Kālachakra Tantra*:<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> In the Kālachakra system there are 21,600 karmic winds, on which consciousness is mounted.

<sup>b</sup> *rgyud kyi rgyal po dpal dus kyi 'khor lo*, in *bka' 'gyur* (*sde dge par phud*, 362), TBRC W22084.77:46-258 (Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985); Chapter 5; Gavin Kilty, trans., in Khedrup Norsang Gyatso (*nor bzang rgya mtsho*, 1423-1513), *Ornament of Stainless Light: An Exposition of the Kālachakra Tantra* (53, where the second line is cited) references this (p. 656, n. 27) as *sde dge* 845 Kangyur *rgyud śrī*, 388b.7.

There does not exist any Buddha bestowing liberation except for what pervades the body.

Sentient beings are Buddhas; other great Buddhas do not exist in the realms of the world.

Khetsun Sangpo: A Buddha dwells within the body; a Buddha that does not reside within the body and thus needs to be newly produced simply does not exist. Aside from a Buddha related with this body, there is no Buddha to be attained that exists externally like a stone, a bug, or snake. The basal matrix-of-One-Gone-to-Bliss is a Buddha within all sentient beings except for being obstructed by adventitious defilements; when those defilements are purified, it is an actual Buddha. Except for the condition of adventitious mistake, from the viewpoint of the mode of abiding of the great basal element of attributes, beings are just great Buddhas. If in this worldly realm you search for a Buddha that is not a sentient being, you will not find anything here in this worldly realm.

and the *Hevajra Tantra*:<sup>a</sup>

The great pristine wisdom dwells in the body  
Having thoroughly forsaken all conceptuality,  
Pervader of all things,  
Though dwelling in the body not produced by the body.

Khetsun Sangpo: How could it be refuted that pristine wisdom dwells in the body! The *Hevajra Tantra* itself says that great pristine wisdom dwells in the body. Since pristine wisdom is the antidote abandoning conceptuality, the two cannot abide together; thus when pristine wisdom is brought to completion, all conceptuality—being what is to be abandoned—is abandoned. Pervading all objects of knowledge, pristine wisdom abides in the body but

<sup>a</sup> *kye'i rdo rje zhes bya ba rgyud kyi rgyal po (hevajra-tantra-rāja-nāma)*, in *bka' 'gyur (sde dge par phud*, 417), TBRC W22084.80:3-28 (Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985); part 1, chapter 1, stanza 12; the Sanskrit in G.W. Farrow and I. Menon, *The Concealed Essence of the Hevajra Tantra with the Commentary of Yogaratnamālā* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1992), 11 [Nag-po-pa (*nag po pa*), *dgyes pa rdo rje'i dka' 'grel rnal 'byor rin po che'i phreng ba in bstan 'gyur (dpe bsdur ma)*, TBRC W1PD95844.2:28-178 (PDF of Pe Cin: *krung go'i bod rig pa'i dpe skrun khang*, 1994-2008)], is: *dhastam ca mahājñānam sarvasaṃkalpavarjitam/ vyāpakāḥ sarvavastūnāḥ dehas tho 'pi na dehajaḥ*. Gavin Kilty in Khedrup Norsang Gyatso, *Ornament of Stainless Light: An Exposition of the Kālachakra Tantra*, 54, where the first line is cited, references this (p. 622, n. 95) as *sde dge* 417 Kangyur rgyud, *nga*, part I, 2a.7.

is not something newly produced by the body—it primordially exists.

and the *Sambhuṭi Tantra*:<sup>a</sup>

Buddha dwells in your own body.  
 Buddha does not exist anywhere else.  
 Those obstructed by the darkness of unknowingness  
 Seek for Buddha elsewhere than the body.

Great pristine wisdom that has thoroughly abandoned  
 All conceptuality dwells in the body.  
 Pervading all things,  
 It dwells in the body but is not produced from the body.

Khetsun Sangpo: Just as there is no earth where space does not pervade, pristine wisdom pervades all phenomena ranging from forms through omniscience. Though it dwells in the body, the body does not act as a cause of pristine wisdom which has existed primordially.

and the *Nondual Conquest* (*gnyis med rnam rgyal*):<sup>b</sup>

In the heart of all sentient beings  
 A matrix of exalted mind-mystery dwells.  
 Endowed with the triple matrix  
 It itself is the matrix-of-One-Gone-to-Bliss.

Khetsun Sangpo: The triple matrix is the matrix of the three Buddha bodies—body of attributes, complete enjoyment body, and emanation bodies.

and also the Great Brahmin [Saraha]:

When scholars explain the treatises,  
 They do not realize that pristine wisdom exists in the body.

Khetsun Sangpo: Saraha is scolding contemporaneous scholars by saying that nowadays when scholars explain the treatises to others, they do not at all understand that the fruitional, final pristine wisdom dwells in the bodies of sentient beings themselves.

and Vajraghaṇṭapāda:

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<sup>a</sup> No bibliographical information.

<sup>b</sup> *gnyis med mnyam nyid rnam rgyal* (*ārya-advayasamatā-vijayākhyā-vikalpa-mahārāja*) in *bka'* 'gyur (*lha sa*, 789), TBRC W26071.96:912-1037 (*Lha sa*: *zhol bka'* 'gyur par khang, [194-]).

In a being who meditates  
On the sole and immutable drop  
Dwelling forever in the heart  
Pristine wisdom will definitely be produced.

Khetsun Sangpo: Yogis who meditate on the indestructible drop at their heart, which is like a sign of the basal matrix-of-One-Gone-to-Bliss, will definitely generate the fruitional great pristine wisdom.

When the nature of this is described at length, in some tantra sets [pristine wisdom] is described as a drop of five lights at the heart; in the Great Completeness it is called the full complement of peaceful and wrathful exalted bodies.

Khetsun Sangpo: Whether in the tantras of the New Translation Schools or in the tantras of the Old Translation School, it is the same. It is not that these descriptions are lacking in the tantras of the New Translation Schools.

Not only do its factors pervade the channel-wheels at the brain and so forth but also since it is the noumenon, it pervades all substrata [that is, all phenomena] because of being pristine wisdom pervading all the stable and the moving.

Khetsun Sangpo: When you realize it, there is nowhere among the inanimate and the animate that it does not pervade.

While being pristine wisdom of clear light endowed with all aspects, it is the drop of five lights, whereby there is feasibility, and since exalted bodies exist [within it], what infeasibility is there!

Khetsun Sangpo: Since such is described in the tantras of both the New and Old Translation schools, how could it be refuted!

Moreover, it is said that heroes and sky-travelers—father and mother—of the twenty-four sacred places dwell in the point between the eyebrows and so forth, and even innumerable deities of the five lineages—forms [manifesting] as Vairochana and so on), of the hundred lineages, and of the three lineages exist in the body of one creature. Consequently, it is not laughable that, according to you, the two—a sentient being and a Buddha—reside inside the lungs and the heart, and go back and forth on one pathway, whereas it is greatly amazing that in the body of one creature there are countless cities of Buddhas and sentient beings moving back and forth!

Khetsun Sangpo: You, Wa-mang Ge-she, are laughing at the possibility that there would be two beings in the body, but that laughter merely comes from your own misunderstanding. When we consider the teachings that there are innumerable Buddhas in our bodies and consider the fact that there are countless minute organisms in our bodies, these are indeed amazing. The only thing that is laughable is your explanation of the thought of that passage!

Hence, it is said in the general tantras [not just in Nyingma tantras] that the mind dwells in the body, and, moreover, it changes in various ways in dependence upon the channels, winds, and drops, and there are also many different distinctive features with regard to the five channel-wheels, twenty-four places, and so forth that are profound points of individual tantras. In particular, you assert all statements in the general tantras that:

- the wind of pristine wisdom moves in the central channel, and in dependence upon this pristine wisdom dawns, and
- karmic winds move in the right and left channels, and due to this the impure consciousnesses of cyclic existence are produced.

Khetsun Sangpo: The impure consciousnesses of cyclic existence are mounted, or ride, on karmic winds, whereby the varieties of mistaken appearances of cyclic existence arise, like waves disturbed.

Therefore, go ahead and assert in your own system that there is a Buddha inside the central channel, that there are sentient beings in the right and left channels, and that they go about on the pathways at the juncture where the central channel and right and left channels gather in one root!

Khetsun Sangpo: The right and left channels enter the central channel at its basis, or root, at the level of the anus.

Hence, the statement that consciousness, which is dependent on karmic winds, and pristine wisdom, which is dependent on pristine winds, mainly dwell in the two, lungs and heart [respectively], is a distinctive feature of the Great Completeness.

Khetsun Sangpo: This is a distinctive feature of the Great Completeness and thus should not be a source of surprise. Being a distinctive feature, it also leads to special quintessential instructions in the Great Completeness for concentrated focusing for the sake of making the winds of pristine wisdom move and for the sake of stopping the movement of karmic winds.

Likewise, since [the Great Completeness] is full of essential points such as the five lights of pristine wisdom, and so forth, that are hidden in other tantras but are clear here, it has distinctive essential points for the dawning of pristine wisdom. Although the root of karmic winds abides in the right and left channels, the winds for issuing forth speech and so forth mainly depend on the lungs, as in the statement that “The lungs are lakes of breath.”

Hence, it is a quintessential instruction of Highest Yoga [Mantra] that:

Because mental conceptions are produced by coarse and subtle karmic winds, those consciousnesses and even pristine wisdom dwell in dependence upon where the winds that are their mounts dwell.

Khetsun Sangpo: Because karmic winds do not remain still but stir, consciousnesses ride on them, producing conceptions, and thus wherever these karmic winds reside, conceptual consciousnesses reside. Similarly, pristine wisdom resides where the pristine winds on which they are mounted reside.

And due to this essential, when concentrative focus is put on the winds, mistake is stopped and pristine wisdom dawns.

So, do you have anything to mock about this! Do you not assert that the clear light and illusory body arise as imprints of winds dissolving in the central channel! Consequently, what need is there say anything about your explaining the profound thought of tantras such as these! You are not even headed in the mere direction of understanding!

Consequently, while being the worst among pedants, even more so forsaking shame and composing a text that you say is a hammer breaking the youthful encased body (*gzhon nu bum sku gcag pa'i tho ba*) is without doubt a situation of being encouraged by a devil from wishing that you to go to a hell.

Khetsun Sangpo: Through deprecating the inconceivable doctrines of the Great Completeness he is showing omens of taking rebirth in a hell.

Since along the way the victuals of a dead indestructible drop spontaneously has, in addition, taken birth as an adornment on your side as you noisily proceed along to a hell-city, scholars should be compassionate!

Khetsun Sangpo: Here, “indestructible drop” also means “mole.” The opponent has claimed that Nyingma-pas do not accept medi-

tation on an indestructible drop at the heart, whereas such is accepted; it is just that the Great Completeness has, in addition, faster ways of manifesting the clear light. Due to this wrong understanding, the indestructible drop is as if dead for the opponent, and Mi-pam-gya-tsho, making a big joke out of this, suggests in ridicule that, given that it is lifeless, the opponent should treat it as food, but, like a large mole, it has appeared on the poor man's side, flapping as he shuffles off to a hell, and thus the opponent should be an object of pity.

This pristine wisdom dwelling at the heart is, moreover, primordially innate basal pristine wisdom but is not a fully qualified Buddha endowed with the two purities from having abandoned the obstructions that are in a person's perspective;

Khetsun Sangpo: Because of not having removed the adventitious defilements, one is not a full-fledged Buddha who has both the natural purity and the purity of having abandoned the adventitious defilements.

it is asserted to be thusness accompanied with defilement.

Khetsun Sangpo: Nyingma-pas assert that it is pristine wisdom, or thusness, accompanied by the adventitious defilements, not a Buddha endowed with the two purities.

Therefore, this expression of your understanding that the two—the mind and the pristine wisdom that is the noumenon of the mind—exist inside the lungs and heart as two unrelated separate persons circles back to you, revealing your own problems of not knowing the thought of the tantras. How could fallacy exist in the thought of the tantras of the Great Completeness!

Khetsun Sangpo: Wa-mang's description of a regular person in the lungs and a Buddha in the heart clearly displays the signs of not understanding even a bit of the tantras; the blame he imputes to others comes back on himself. While inconceivably great scholars and adepts of India and Tibet valued the Great Completeness as the "monarch of views, the clear light great completion" that no one could refute, how could it be that you, Wa-mang Ge-she, without understanding even a portion of it have pretended to refute it!



## 8. Rainbow Body

In addition, it is Gung-thang who said, “When the meaning of the explanations in the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*<sup>a</sup> and so forth that the wind of pristine wisdom endowed with the five lights is the basis for achieving the illusory body is understood, the Nyingmas’ rainbow body is destroyed like a hut of sand.”

Khetsun Sangpo: Gung-thang Kön-chog-tan-pay-drön-me (*gung thang dkon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me*, 1762-1823) made the claim that the famous Nyingma practice of the rainbow body loses its fame when one looks into how, according to Ge-lug-pa presentations, the wind of pristine wisdom serves as the basis, or substantial cause, for achieving an illusory body.

Gung-thang indeed is, in general, one of amazing analysis, but on this occasion his words—having the defects of being too attached to his own system’s mere textbooks and having too little acquaintance with Nyingma tenets—are reduced to letting his deficiencies slip out.

Khetsun Sangpo: If Gung-thang had had more acquaintance with Nyingma tantras and expositions, it is likely that he would not have made such a statement, but he was too used to his own school’s presentations of their own system and their refutations of Nyingma positions.

This statement is only the fault of his idea in the perspective of his own thinking that [Nyingmas] assert that “A luminous body of illusory physicality is achieved using this coarse body as the basis for achieving an illusory body.” However, Nyingmas do not assert that the coarse body is the substantial cause of a body of pristine wisdom.

Khetsun Sangpo: No Nyingma tantra says that our gross body composed of flesh, blood, and so forth acts as the substantial cause of an exalted body of pristine wisdom.

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<sup>a</sup> *de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi sku gsung thugs kyi gsang chen gsang ba 'dus pa (sarvatathāgata-kāya-vāk-citta-rahasyo guhyasamāja)*, in *bka' 'gyur (sde dge par phud*, 442), TBRC W22084.81:181-297 (Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985).

A body of pristine wisdom dawns from the projection of the spontaneous self-effulgence of primordial clear light, not from the coarse body. Nevertheless, due to a profound feature of the path there indeed is the distinctive feature that even the coarse body dissolves into a mass of light.

Khetsun Sangpo: A body of pristine wisdom is achieved through the primordial noumenal clear light, fundamental mind; except for this, our gross body composed of flesh, blood, and so forth cannot in the least bring about a body of pristine wisdom, as if it were like clay serving as the substantial cause of a pot. Rather, a body of pristine wisdom is achieved from spontaneous factors of primordial clear light, the effulgence of its spontaneous nature. Still, the Nyingma practice of rainbow body has the capacity to dissolve the gross body into light. How? When noumenal fundamental pristine wisdom, which from primordial time has a nature of spontaneity, is manifested, this gross body of its own accord breaks down into a mass of rainbow light. This capacity exists in Nyingma as a distinctive feature.

This is like the assertion about maturation into an exalted body that although for fruitional knowledge-holders refined wind and mind have matured into a divine body, there are differences of whether the coarse body has been purified or not.

Khetsun Sangpo: Fruitional knowledge-holders (*rnam smin rig 'dzin*) are the first of four levels of knowledge-holders, the others being knowledge-holders with control over lifespan (*tshe la dbang ba'i rig 'dzin*), knowledge-holders of the great seal (*phyag rgya chen po'i rig 'dzin*), and knowledge-holders of spontaneous presence (*lhun gyis grub pa'i rig 'dzin*). With regard to maturation into an exalted body, when practicing this first level of a fruitional knowledge-holder, coarse body and mind dissolve into their refined essence and ripen into a divine body through method and wisdom such that the karmic winds producing the mistake of this world have been extinguished and thus are nonexistent. Nevertheless, there are different varieties among fruitional knowledge-holders in terms of whether the practitioner is capable of purifying the coarse body such that it turns into rainbow light, this being due to degree of familiarization with the path.

In general, the measures of the coarse body having becoming refined are not in the same mode. With respect to those who have achieved knowledge-holding on the level of the desire realm and the form realm

(endowed with the eight attributes of sovereignty—subtlety, lightness, and so forth), once mantra has been achieved and the coarse body has become refined, they cannot be seen by ordinary beings, and their bodies are refined.

Khetsun Sangpo: They can be seen by those on the same level and by those with the divine eye and so forth.

From having purified the coarse body itself, they indeed hold a refined [body], but this is not the same as an illusory body achieved from mere wind and mind; it is a mere case of the body having become refined through the force of having achieved mantra. Not only that, but also an aged body becoming youthful and refined through essence-extracts is similarly [not an illusory body achieved from mere wind and mind].

Khetsun Sangpo: There are many types of essence-extracts, from minerals, fluids, flowers, and so on. Through using essence-extracts yogis, if capable of remaining in meditative stabilization for a long time, can cause the body to become clear such that it becomes refined, whereupon they can remain in a very long life, achieving the knowledge-fund of long life. This kind of refined body is like those achieved through mantra.

Even the achievement of an illusory body of wind and mind is an *actual* illusory body of Mantra [only] if it is by someone with a fully qualified Mantra path such that special realization experiencing the actual factuality of the clear light, or a similitude of it, through the force of the winds having entered the central channel has been attained.

Khetsun Sangpo: When through the quintessential instructions of the generation-stage and the completion-stage special realization of the clear light occurs and a refined body is achieved, this is an actual illusory body of Mantra. It is truly a great quality.

Otherwise, even though a body is emanated from concentration through the power of having familiarized to wind and mind such that in one's own perspective the emanated body appears as whatever one wishes and has become very stable, this is not the same as an illusory body of Mantra.

Khetsun Sangpo: Even if one is able to perform many types of emanations through very stable meditative stabilization, there is still nothing fantastic about it; cyclic existence has not been left behind. A person who can create such emanations may fancy that a high level of adepthood has been attained, but it not so amazing; it not like achieving an illusory body of Mantra, even though it is

gained from familiarizing with wind and mind.

Such is like (1) Outsider [non-Buddhists] having attained meditative stabilization who enter into the [recently] died and perform transference such that they are able to take control of another body,

Khetsun Sangpo: There are non-Buddhist Forder *saddhus* (adepts) who in dependence upon achieving ability with wind and mind can leave their own aged body and enter into the body of youth who has recently died and use it as their own. This capacity comes from mastery over wind and mind, but they have not in the least attained the level of a Superior.

(2) sorceress spirits,

Khetsun Sangpo: Sorceress spirits (*phra men ma*) are a type of nonhuman who through the force of attaining attributes of meditative stabilization are able to make magical demonstrations of body, but they do not have the capacities gained from having achieved an illusory body of Mantra.

(3) those having magical emanation achieved from karma,

Khetsun Sangpo: From deeds done in the past (*karma*) some are able to display decidedly great magical emanations, but they still have no means to attain the level of a Superior.

and (4) those who, from having achieved concentrations such as the totalities and so forth (*zad par sogs kyi bsam gtan*), are able to display magical transformations; they are able to make their own mind appear in whatever divine aspect they wish.

Khetsun Sangpo: From achieving the four concentrations and bringing the fourth concentration to its conclusion and gaining the special meditative stabilizations of the totalities (*zad par gyi ting nge 'dzin*) one can transformationally make all the directions manifest as just earth or just water or just fire or just wind, or as the four primary colors, or as endless space, or endless consciousness. Although these attributes of meditative stabilization are in many ways inconceivable even to the point where through its power one can remain for an eon in a single meditation, they do not help in getting beyond cyclic existence, even if, like the others just mentioned, the mind can appear as whatever one likes.

These are like the three strengths of manifestation, which are divine bodies of the generation-stage, or mantra bodies, but not bodies of the completion-stage, or bodies of pristine wisdom.

Khetsun Sangpo: When beginning cultivation of the generation-stage, there are three strengths of manifestation, starting with a phase called “manifesting as an object of mind” (*vid kyi yul du gsal*) in which the object—a divine body for instance—brightly appears to your mental consciousness. Then, there is phase called “manifesting as an object of appearance” (*snang ba'i yul du gsal*) in which even if you look with your eyes, you see it as you do with your mental consciousness. Eventually, as you meditate more and more, there is a final phase called “manifesting as an object of direct perception” (*mngon sum gyi yul du gsal*) in which the divine body becomes an object of direct perception even with the capacity to be felt as hard. These levels are accomplished through the potential of meditative stabilization in the generation-stage, but are still not the type of body achieved through the pristine wisdom clear light of the completion-stage and thus are lower than that even if they are in the category of final attributes of the generation-stage.

It cannot be asserted that whatever is a divine body of wind and mind produced from the Mantra path's special method of the winds entering the central channel is *necessarily* a divine body of the completion-stage because even though there is an appearance of a divine body with regard to which stability has been attained in terms of wind and mind, [it could be that] the realizational actual clear light has not been introduced and identified.

Khetsun Sangpo: Previously, Mi-pam-gya-tsho was speaking about divine bodies on the level of the generation-stage, and now he turns to examining divine bodies on the level of the completion-stage and specifically when a divine body rises from a combination of wind and mind after the winds have entered, remained, and dissolved in the central channel. The reason why this level of divine body could not be asserted to be of the completion-stage and thus a divine body that is a self-appearance of pristine wisdom revolves around whether the primordially, basally abiding body of attributes, existing in oneself, has been introduced and identified. If this has been identified, then the divine body can be asserted to be a divine body of the completion-stage.

This is because aside from just being imaginative meditation with that divine body having arisen as an effective thing compounded from wind and mind and being sealed with the stamp of the lack of true existence, one has not realized the meaning of the mode of abiding, the undifferentiable two truths, as is established by the assertions of your own [Ge-lug-pa] tenets.

Khetsun Sangpo: A problem making it impossible to assert that a divine body is a self-appearance of pristine wisdom comes if it arises as an impermanent product compounded from wind and mind. A divine body—that dawns from the power of the capacities of the winds entering, remaining, and dissolving in the central channel—arises from gaining familiarity with imagination of a divine body; it still is not an actual divine body that is a self-appearance of pristine wisdom and does not depend on meditative familiarization. An actual divine body of one who has realized the undifferentiable two truths does not have to be meditated, because it is a natural appearance of pristine wisdom, and thus the two truths are undifferentiable such that one is beyond the proliferations of object of meditation and meditator. A divine body arisen from the power of the winds entering, remaining, and dissolving in the central channel, however, requires further training of the mental continuum. Ge-lug-pa tenets themselves say this.

*Objection:* If the clear light at the end of the four dissolutions<sup>a</sup> upon

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<sup>a</sup> Dan-ma-lo-chö described the four dissolutions in an oral teaching:

Concerning the signs of the winds dissolving in the central channel, (1) the internal sign of earth dissolving into water is that an appearance like a mirage occurs. What does “dissolve” mean? Just as in the process of death, When it is said that earth dissolves into water, this means that the capacity of the earth element—the hard and obstructive factors of the body—to act as a basis of consciousness ceases, and the capacity of the water element—the fluid and moistening factors—to act as a basis of consciousness is enhanced. (2) The internal sign of the water element dissolving into fire is an appearance of what looks like smoke, rather like the smoke of incense filling a room. Then the internal sign of the fire element dissolving into the wind element is an appearance like fireflies, or lighting bugs. (3) The internal sign that the wind is beginning to dissolve into consciousness is an appearance of what looks to be a fluttering butter lamp that, burning down low, casts a flickering light. It is also said that this appearance is like the cast of light above a deeply burning butter lamp inside a large bowl. When the winds that serve to move, or drive, conceptuality dissolve into what is called “appearance,” the appearance that occurs is a vivid whiteness like a pure autumn night sky filled with white moonlight. (4) When that white appearance,

the winds having entered the central channel has been identified, there is no way for it not to be a Mantra path.

*Answer:* In general

Khetsun Sangpo: A differentiation needs to be made between those systems that are limited to the generation-stage and the completion-stage and the final system of the Great Completeness that is beyond this limitation.

that indeed is true, but in your own [Ge-lug-pa] system such can occur:

- because you assert that the clear light of fundamental mind itself is not sufficient and that thus it is necessary to newly train in meditating on the emptiness of true existence with respect to it,

Khetsun Sangpo: In fact, when the nature, the fundamental noumenon, has been identified, there is no need for newly training in emptiness; you have reached the end point.

- and because you assert that a path of definite goodness severing the root of cyclic existence does not exist in a Vajra Vehicle that is unrelated with the Middle Way view.

Khetsun Sangpo: The claim is that the mode of manifesting the clear light of the fundamental mind in the Great Completeness cannot cut the root of cyclic existence because of not being related with the view of the Middle Way School.

This is known from Tsong-kha-pa's statements in the *Scroll Offered to Ren-da-wa*<sup>a</sup> that (1) the clear light induced by the path of the Vajra Vehicle

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along with the winds that are its mount, dissolves into the appearance called "increase," then there appears a vivid redness or orangeness like a pure autumn sky filled with sunlight. Then when the appearance called "increase" dissolves into that called "near-attainment," what appears is a vivid blackness like an autumn sky filled with the thick darkness of the post-dusk period. When, in turn, near-attainment dissolves into clear light, what appears is an immaculate vacuity like the autumn sky at dawn, completely free of any sort of pollution—free of the three polluting faults of moonlight, sunlight, and darkness.

For more detail see Lati Rinbochay and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Death, Intermediate State, and Rebirth in Tibetan Buddhism* (London: Rider, 1980; reprint, Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion, 1985).

<sup>a</sup> *red mda' ba la phul ba'i shog dril*, TBRC W20510.4939:523-530. This material is not found in *rje btsun 'jam dbyangs kyi gsung rje btsun tsong kha pas yi ger mdzad nas rje red mda' pa la phul ba'i man ngag thun mong ma yin pa cig*, TBRC W20510-4939-523-530, nor does it appear to be in *rje btsun red mda' ba'i gsung ngag dris lan* (TBRC bka' 'bum thor bu W22109-3107, 613-628).

through methods causing the winds to enter the central channel and (2) rising from within this in a divine body of wind and mind are paths of just calm abiding and magical emanation, but are not paths for attaining liberation.

Khetsun Sangpo: Mi-pam-gya-tsho's point is that he does not need to explain how Ge-lug-pas assert that the clear light of fundamental mind cannot fulfill the role of the final clear light, for you can read it yourself in Tsong-kha-pa's description in an explanation of his positions gained from the force of his meditation that he sent to Ren-da-wa Shön-nu-lo-drö. Read it, and you will believe that these are his positions.

[Tsong-kha-pa] asserts that even though one actualized the illusory body and clear light of Mantra's own path, aside from mere calm abiding there would be no self-flow of special insight. If this were not the case, what would be the meaning of those Mantra paths not fulfilling the role of special insight realizing the suchness of all things such that it is necessary to further rely on reasoned analysis described in the Middle Way School!

Therefore, if the quintessential instructions of the fourth initiation that makes manifest the meaning of the primordial basal mode of abiding—the clear light nature of the mind, the undifferentiable two truths—are not supplemented with the quintessential instructions of the Great Completeness, not even the mere metaphoric pristine wisdom is generated in one's continuum, then what need is there to mention the actual pristine wisdom!

Khetsun Sangpo: The clear light nature of the mind, the self-effulgence of the basally abiding body of attributes, is the single taste of the two truths, conventional and ultimate. To actualize the meaning of the undifferentiable two truths, it is necessary to assimilate the quintessential instructions of the precious fourth initiation, the word initiation, of the Great Completeness. Without them, the metaphoric pristine wisdom cannot be generated in one's continuum, never mind the actual pristine wisdom.

When one looks at his [that is, Tsong-kha-pa's] texts that communicate realization as to whether those [metaphoric and actual pristine wisdoms] have been generated in [his] continuum or not, one can nakedly understand through these explanations, which—aside from still placing hope in the objects understood about the individual two truths—have not arrived at ascertainment about the mode of abiding of the undifferentiable two truths.



Hence, when the actual status (*don gyi bzhugs tshul*) of the mode of abiding (*gnas lugs*) is introduced and identified, you can generate the metaphoric pristine wisdom in your continuum, whether or not the sheer emptiness—that is the stoppage of coarse wind and mind and is like space devoid of conditions—has dawned.

Khetsun Sangpo: Once you identify well the self-entity of the basally abiding pristine wisdom, the metaphoric pristine wisdom can be generated in your continuum whether or not you have stopped the coarse winds and minds and whether or not a sheer emptiness like space in which no conceptualizations dawn and you remain in such a state. This sheer emptiness has no further purpose.

However, when this [actual mode of subsisting of the mode of abiding] has not been introduced and identified, then even though you remain for a long time within stoppage of winds and conceptualizations and have established a multicolored flashing divine body in the perspective of your own mind, you should know that this is no different from the meditation of those [cultivating] the concentrations,

Khetsun Sangpo: Though you remain in a state in an immaculate vacuity without the generation of conceptuality and, in the perspective of your mind, there is a meditative experience of a vividly shining divine body, this does not pass beyond practicing being a god of one of the four concentrations; it is not at all a divine body of pristine wisdom of a Superior.

like the statement in the *Descent into Laṅkā Sūtra*:<sup>a</sup>

Visions of light, the likes of lotuses,  
And stripes like a rainbow in the sky—  
These various signs are to be taken along  
The path of [non-Buddhist] Forders.

Khetsun Sangpo: Not seeing the actual pristine wisdom, but relying on the capacities, for instance, of the meditative stabilization of calm abiding, even non-Buddhists have experiences of various sorts of light, lotuses, and rainbows in the sky. There is nothing amazing about these; they are just from the power of calm abiding.

<sup>a</sup> 'phags pa lang kar gshegs pa'i theg pa chen po'i mdo (*ārya-laṅkāvatāra-mahāyāna-sūtra*), in *bka'* 'gyur (*sde dge par phud*, 107), TBRC W22084.49:113-384 (Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985).

Furthermore, nowadays Gya-do [Ja-pa Do-ngag],<sup>a</sup> who makes a pretense of meditating on subtle drops, indeed places great importance on the spiritual experiences of stopping the mind, yet if one who has achieved calm abiding sets without thinking anything, nonconceptuality will dawn as if the mind has mixed with space, but how could this be realization!

Khetsun Sangpo: Similarly, nowadays Gya-pa Do-ngag makes a big deal out of the spiritual experiences that occur in meditating on subtle drops when the minds temporarily stops, but if merely stopping conceptuality is terrific, then those who have merely cultivated calm abiding without any concern for special insight realizing selflessness have similar experiences even of the mind mixing with space when they remain without thinking anything.

Such occurs for some who have fainted—the force in the channels being excessive and so forth—but how could this be clear light!

Khetsun Sangpo: There are occasions when due to the force of movements within the channels, the winds stop, persons faint, and as they are about to do so, they see various sorts of amazing sights, but how could this fulfill the role of clear light!

Though the mind stops for those in the state of nondiscrimination for a certain number of eons, how could this be clear light!

Khetsun Sangpo: How could the mere stoppage of the mind in the meditative equipoise of nondiscrimination ever fulfill the role of clear light!

Though the discrimination of forms disappears for those in infinite space and though coarse conceptuality stops for eighty thousand great eons for those in the peak of cyclic existence, how could this be clear light!

Khetsun Sangpo: When one is born in the peak of cyclic existence, coarse discrimination stops even for eighty great eons, but in time the karma keeping one in that state is consumed, and one could even be reborn in a hell. How could that stoppage of coarse discrimination fulfill the role of clear light!

In Sa-kya [it is said that] if one is not roused [from meditative stabilization] by a lotus-endowed consort, one goes astray for an eon;

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<sup>a</sup> 'gya mdo/ 'gya pa mdo sngags; 'gya is a place name, also spelled 'ja'; thus, an alternative spelling for his name is Ja-pa Do-ngag ('ja' pa mdo sngags). TBRC lists name variants *a lags mdo sngags* and 'ja' pa a lags mdo sngags and reports that 'jigs med bstan pa'i nyi ma (1865-1926) was his student.

Khetsun Sangpo: In Sa-kya teachings there are a great many types of consorts, such as the lotus-endowed; it is said that one can be stuck in meditative stabilization up to an eon, unable to achieve Buddhahood, if one cannot be roused from meditative stabilization by such a consort.

there are many such situations. Nowadays also, there are explanations of a great many systems of taming wind and mind and variously named [systems] of channel constitutions that [result in] death-like twisted nostrils. There also are women who lose their senses and pass out for a day or two.

Hence, if the object of realization, the face of intrinsic awareness, is not introduced and identified, of what benefit is it for the mind to stop for a while!

Khetsun Sangpo: For these reasons, if you cannot identify well your own noumenon, the face of intrinsic awareness, the temporary stoppage of mind by way of karmic effects or by way of developing calm abiding is not at all helpful.

Though minds and mental factors are stopped by the meditative absorption of cessation, how could one have gone in the direction of the clear light of Mantra!

Khetsun Sangpo: Even if during the meditative absorption of cessation all minds and mental factors stop even for an eon, how could this fulfill to role of the clear light?

When all sentient beings die, their minds stop, but how could they have gotten hold of the clear light!

Therefore, if through a lama's quintessential instructions you are introduced to and identify the nonconceptual noumenon, the basal mode of abiding, then at the time of the clear light of the path the noumenal mother and child meet; otherwise, they do not meet through conceptuality.

Khetsun Sangpo: The clear light to which we are introduced through the magnificent blessings of the lama's quintessential instructions is the child clear light, and the mother clear light is the inconceivable clear light of the body of attributes that has abided as the primordial mode of abiding. These two meet, so to speak, like a child being set on mother's lap, as in the prayer-wish, "May we be liberated like a child set on mother's lap." On the primordial mode of abiding that is mother's lap the child that is your presently meditated noumenal emptiness is set—you are able to identify the undifferentiable reality of the primordial mode of abiding and of

the noumenal emptiness of your own mind, whereby you can be liberated. Conceptuality cannot bring about such a meeting. Since conceptuality itself is mistaken mind, it can remove some mistakes, but cannot help with this.

The case is the same with the meditative absorptions.

Khetsun Sangpo: Even though the meditative absorptions of the Form Realm and the Formless Realm can temporarily stop conceptuality, in the end those conceptions rise again when certain conditions are encountered.

The paths of those for whom experiences of the stoppage of the mind and so forth have dawned but understanding of the basal clear light has not formed have shown their arse!

If you have discernment of subtle [mind], coarse consciousnesses have stopped, but how could mentality (*vid*) have stopped! If not, though you trained in the emptiness of true existence, who could you be mindful of it!

Khetsun Sangpo: If mentality has stopped and become nonexistent, there would be no means of knowledge; since the mind has stopped, by what means of knowing could you train in the emptiness of true existence?

If there is dualistic appearance of object viewed and viewer, how could this be fully qualified clear light!

When, having been introduced to and identified the basal clear light, the entity of intrinsic awareness is sustained, even if dualistic appearance indeed has not been stopped, self-cognition directly realizes the entity of intrinsic awareness in accordance with immutable space by way of the example of space and clouds.

Khetsun Sangpo: When yogis who are common beings identify the basal clear light through a lama's quintessential instructions, they are not able to stop conceptuality, but this does cause a problem because whether or not they have stopped conceptuality, they still have the capacity to liberate themselves. How? They have identified the clear light of the basal noumenon through the lama's quintessential instructions that center around the fact that when the sky is obstructed by clouds, even though the sky is not seen, it is there, and when the obstructing clouds clear away, blue sky is directly seen. Likewise, our adventitious obstructions prevent perception of the clear light, but when it is separated from these ad-

ventitious defilements, the self-face of the basal clear light is identified.

During the clear light in the Path of Method there indeed is no dualistic appearance like a cloudless sky, but the clear light from its own side does not differ in being nonconceptual spontaneously established essential purity.

Khetsun Sangpo: The basal clear light in itself is primordially without conceptuality, with a spontaneously established nature and an essentially pure entity that is the body of attributes.



## 9. Basal Clear Light

Now let us explain a little the profound points of these topics.

Khetsun Sangpo: Previously, Mi-pam-gya-tsho has been discussing and refuting others' modes of assertion; now he will lay out the actual assertions of the Great Completeness on identifying the clear light.

Although the continuum of all conceptuality is severed in the actual clear light at the end of the three appearances, naked identification of the clear light comes by the force of the profound path *concordant* with the clear light.

Khetsun Sangpo: Whether one is an ordinary being or not, the clear light dawns immediately upon the cessation of the three appearances—vivid white appearance, vivid red increase of appearance, and vivid black near-attainment. This is why it is called “the clear light at the end of the three appearances.” In the clear light, the continuation of all conceptuality is severed, so we need to look into how the clear light is nakedly identified. Keep in mind that the clear light at the end of the three appearances still involves change and development, whereas the noumenal clear light is immutable.

For example, although emptiness innately abides primordially in all phenomena, those who have not entered the path do not know it even in the slightest, but it is identified when you become familiar with it by reasoning and experience it through meditation.

Khetsun Sangpo: Emptiness is the noumenon that innately has always abided with phenomena, existing in the continuums of all sentient beings but not at all known by those who have not entered the path. However, in dependence upon a lama's quintessential instructions yogis enter the path, become familiar with emptiness, and gradually experience it, whereby they can identify it.

Similarly, although the basal clear light that is primordially inborn with the mind abides without transition or change at all times, it is not identified, but when the intrinsic awareness of the Great Completeness is introduced and identified, understanding and experience are generated with regard to the clear light that is the nature of the eight collections of consciousness even while they have not ceased, and in thick sleep and so forth

the clear light is gotten hold of without needing to seek out another method.

Khetsun Sangpo: Primordially, for inexpressible time from the formation of cyclic existence, our mind and natural basal pristine wisdom have formed together. No one could tell how long this has been, no one could speak of its beginning. It is the basal innate clear light; from among the states of the basis, the path, and the fruit, this is the clear light of the basally abiding body of attributes. This clear light never changes, even for an instant; it is inseparably with us. Even if we are born lowly with the body of an animal, the nature of our mind, the basal clear light, abides together with us inseparably, but because we have not identified it, it is of no benefit. Not only that, but also at present we have obtained a precious human body endowed with the attributes of leisure and fortune, have obtained profound guidance, and even if we have done other practices such as those of the generation-stage and the completion-stage, we still have not been able to identify, to get hold of, this clear light of the basally abiding body of attributes.

Whether we speak of other schools or those dwelling on lower paths, it is crucial for ordinary beings like us to gain, in accordance with the Great Completeness, a lama's introduction to the clear light of the basally abiding body of attributes from within the division of the body of attributes into basal, path, and fruitional. The lama points out, "The noumenon of the mind is immutable, primordially existing in yourself, never undergoing change, but because you have not identified your own face, your own entity, there is no benefit." This introduction within our basic ordinary state is extremely important.

Although everyone speaks of taking the fruit as the path, when you carefully look into this in subtle detail, except for the Great Completeness the meaning cannot be opened up. Why? There are those who practice the generation-stage and the completion-stage right through to the path of the mind of clear light at the end of the three appearances, and there are those who emphasize practice of subtle drop yoga as in the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* and the like, but they have still have not identified the clear light of the basally abiding body of attributes; they are only at the door.

What does the Great Completeness have? In the Great Completeness we constantly keep in mind, without forgetting, "taking the fruit as the path." Because a Buddha's body of attributes is the



final fruit, the lama introduces us to its mode of abiding. We have to generate a special mind of ascertainment and strive continuously at becoming familiar with this empty luminosity in order to remove adventitious defilements, but, in terms of the nature of the view, since we have identified the clear light of the basally abiding body of attributes, we have conclusively gotten at the final aim—what is finally observed—and are taking just it as the path. We conclusively take the body of attributes itself as the path. In the meantime, no matter that we are not able for the time being to manifest certain Buddha attributes, the fruit—the noumenon that has been identified—never changes.

Thus, the way to take the fruit as the path derives from the lama's introducing and your identifying the mode of abiding of the noumenon, which does not differ in the slightest from the final nature even of a Buddha manifestly endowed with thirty-two signs and eighty beauties.

Most Mantra systems make use of the pristine wisdom that is attained on the sixth Bodhisattva ground and involves change and transition while seeking to enhance it, but in the Great Completeness we leave aside the six collections of consciousness without paying attention to them. Why? The lama introduces us to the body of attributes that itself is the fruit, whereby the continuum of this final object of observation is sustained in practice, due to which along the way the source of mistakenness, the six collections of consciousness, are severed from their root, like cutting a tree from its roots whereby its branches, twigs, and leaves are perforce destroyed. This is called "taking the fruit as the path." Except for the six collections of consciousness stopping naturally of their own accord, there is no need to intentionally stop them. Without stopping them, they naturally stop. Because we get through to the innermost view, all mistakes perforce cease.

First we hear in our ears about the intrinsic awareness that is the natural clear light, the basal clear light, from a lama, then get some understanding of it, then through practice generate experience of it, and then through the gradual increase of experience adventitious defilements stage by stage decrease—first the gross and then the subtle.

If you have familiarized with the clear light, it will dawn in deep sleep without requiring some other technique. But if you have not become accustomed to the clear light, then when in death a coarse form of the clear light dawns, you will not be able take

the stronghold, and it will pass in a moment without being identified. But once you have achieved experience of your own intrinsic awareness through the power of meditation in accordance with the lama's introduction, you gradually, as your familiarization increases greater and greater, will become able to get hold of your own noumenon.

[In the Path of Method] through piercing to the pith of the quintessential instructions for achieving mental isolation, experience of the four empties is induced, and at the completion of partial similarities to the three appearances a subtle mentality that is partially similar to actual clear light dawns. When that is identified, it can characterize the actual clear light.

Khetsun Sangpo: In the completion-stage of the *Guhyasamāja* system, you practice physical isolation, verbal isolation, and mental isolation. Through achieving success with the quintessential instructions for mental isolation, which is an almost final level of the path, you experience the four empties—empty, very empty, greatly empty, and all-empty, which are also called appearance, increase of appearance, near-attainment, and clear light—the last occurring when something like the three appearances have ceased into the noumenon. At this point, something like the clear light dawns, even if it is not the actual clear light since it is a subtle mentality. Though this still is not the noumenal clear light when the fruit is taken as the path and is a subtle mentality, good identification of it yields a sense of the actual clear light. It is like a substitute that can partially portray for you what the clear light is.

[However,] when the Great Completeness intrinsic awareness is identified, the entity of this inexpressible knowledge, intrinsically aware emptiness (*rig stong*) beyond causes and conditions, is uncompounded, permanent.

Khetsun Sangpo: The entity of the basal body of attributes introduced to you by a lama of the Great Completeness is the empty, uncompounded, permanent noumenon. No matter to what degree a subtle mind of clear light dawns, it is nevertheless compounded. Being within the eight collections of consciousness, which are necessarily compounded, such an appearance of clear light can be no more than compounded.

Although it exists mixed with the eight collections of consciousness that are compounded and impermanent, in the perspective of experience it ap-

pears having the aspect of the immutable mode of abiding of the noumenon. In accordance with the statement in the *Kālachakra Tantra*, “This is the unborn noumenon,<sup>a</sup> giving rise to mistaking it for being produced, like the sky in water,” even both the metaphoric clear light and the Great Completeness identification of intrinsic awareness are appearances—to the mind that is like water—of reflections of the actual clear light that is like the sky.

Khetsun Sangpo: The metaphoric clear light, which dawns through the force of prolonged familiarization in meditation, and the intrinsic awareness, which can be immediately identified easily without any hardship through a lama’s introduction whether or not you have done much meditation, are similar in terms of how they dawn to a beginner. For, even the latter is not freed from all defilements, though as the unmistakable path it has the aspect of the permanent noumenon, but it is mixed, so to speak, with mind, like a reflection of the sky in water.

[Similarly,] although an awareness meditating on emptiness ascertains emptiness as uncompounded, this awareness produced having the aspect of emptiness is indeed impermanent, but awareness and emptiness do not appear in experience as isolatedly different (*tha dad du yan gar myong bar mi snang*); in subsequent knowledge they are differentiable, like a reflection of sky in water.

Khetsun Sangpo: An awareness meditating on the usual sort of emptiness understands an uncompounded emptiness; though that awareness itself is impermanent and thus compounded, it appears as if mixed with emptiness, not separately. Subsequently, however, the two—awareness and emptiness—can be distinguished, like a reflection of sky in water; the awareness is like the water, and emptiness is like space. Gradually, you can distinguish between the sky and the water through the force of your meditative experience.

An enumerative emptiness (*stong nyid rnam grangs pa*) is a mere non-affirming negative; although it does not exist as a different entity from a pot and so forth, by way of conceptually isolatable factors [a pot’s] emptiness is not superimposedly imputed to be compounded, just as indranīla is not superimposedly imputed to be silver.

<sup>a</sup> *chos*, which sometimes substitutes for *chos nyid*, *dharmatā*.

Khetsun Sangpo: This sort of preliminary emptiness taught to beginners is an enumerative emptiness; it is just a mere absence, not the profound emptiness that has a nature of the quiescence of all proliferations. The enumerative emptiness of a pot, for example, is not a different entity from a pot, but conceptuality can isolate pot from its emptiness and emptiness from pot, and thus just as indranīla which is dark blue is not imagined to be silver since the colors are so markedly different, emptiness is not imagined to be compounded even though a pot is compounded. Rather, emptiness is necessarily uncompounded.

The innate non-enumerative ultimate is the final nature of pots and so forth, and when it is seen, it is an object of knowledge by inexpressible individual self-knowledge that destroys both modes of apprehension—of pots and of non-affirming negatives—and hence it is the grand uncompoundedness (*'dus ma byas chen*); it is not superimposedly imputed to be compounded or even an uncompounded nonaffirming negative.

Khetsun Sangpo: The non-enumerative ultimate is our final view of the Middle. The mode of abiding that is the natural, innate profound emptiness is not a case of positing a pot, for instance, as a substratum and its emptiness as different from it. Rather, a pot is empty of pot; a pot is without production. Appearance and emptiness; while empty, appearing; appearance and emptiness unfragmented; appearance and emptiness simultaneously dawning and hence final. Because these appear simultaneously, when this is seen, both (1) the apprehension that a pot, a conventionality with a compounded nature that is a substratum of emptiness, exists and (2) the apprehension that an emptiness, a permanent uncompounded mere absence, exists are lost, are already fallen apart. There is nothing exceeding this inexpressible, unthinkable mode of abiding, the final view of the Middle, to be known by individual self-knowledge, nothing beyond it. In it there is no way of making superimpositions such as “compounded” or “uncompounded” as it is unthinkable and inexpressible, since it is beyond the objects of such designations. So, it is called the “grand uncompoundedness.”

The natural innateness of mind (*sems kyi lhan skyes*) also is likewise; since it is experienced as beyond the poles of existence and nonexistence, it does not abide as a compounded or as a solely empty uncompounded,

Khetsun Sangpo: The innateness of mind, fundamental mind,

which is naturally together with the profound emptiness, is likewise beyond such designations. In the face experiencing the inconceivable noumenon beyond all polarities such as existence and nonexistence, duality and nonduality, fundamental mind is not a thing that has a nature of being compounded from causes and conditions, nor is it a nonaffirming negative like an empty vessel, a mere emptiness, since if it is held to be uncompounded, a mode of apprehension would still remain in thinking, “It is empty.” As the *Great Mother Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras* speak of “emptiness but just empty,” the first emptiness being the delineation of the emptiness that is a nonaffirming negative, and the second being that the mode of apprehension of it as empty.

but is asserted as self-arisen pristine wisdom beyond causes and conditions, the uncompounded nonenumerative great emptiness not abiding in even any extreme—permanent beyond transformation and change, just great bliss without any of the pangs of change, utterly not compounded or the like.

Khetsun Sangpo: Such an emptiness is great bliss without any aspect of discomfort, not at all related with compounded things.

The thoughts:

Nevertheless, now at the time of the metaphoric pristine wisdom the innate ultimate pristine wisdom—the meaning that is the object expressed by the names “noumenal mind of clear light” or “fundamental mind” and so forth—dawns in the perspective of a mental consciousness (*yid shes/ yid kyi rnam shes*), and when it dawns, it is not experienced differently from mentality (*yid*); hence, since it has increase higher and higher and ceases, it is a subtle mind (*yid phra ba*), whereas if it were not, it would not be fit to be meditatively cultivated.

Khetsun Sangpo: The objector’s idea is that for a beginner the metaphoric pristine wisdom dawns in the context of a mental consciousness, specifically a subtle mind, and since it advances over the range of the path and changes, it has to be a subtle mind, for if it were not, it could not be an object of cultivation.

and so forth, and moreover the thoughts:

Intrinsic awareness or pristine wisdom could not be permanent.

and so on are like superimposedly imputing an oyster shell to be silver.

Khetsun Sangpo: Equating subtle mind and fundamental mind is as silly as imagining that a certain type of shell is silver just because both the shell and silver are white. Just as the shell cannot perform the functions of silver, no matter how much one might stubbornly insist that some sort of clear light dawns with subtle mind, nevertheless a mutable subtle mind can in no way fulfill the role of the immutable clear light mode of abiding.

The actual meaning that is the singleness of taste of knower and known or the union of appearance and emptiness, intrinsic awareness and emptiness, is the mode of abiding. Khetsun Sangpo:

Due to the magical play of knowing and not knowing,  
If that itself is known, a Buddha,  
And if not known, a sentient being wandering in cyclic existence.

འིག་དང་མ་འིག་ཆོ་འཕུལ་གྱིས། །  
དེ་ཉིད་འིག་ན་སངས་རྒྱས་དང་། །  
མ་འིག་སེམས་ཅན་འཁོར་བར་འབྱུངས། །

That, for instance, one portion of it is emptiness and another portion is intrinsic awareness is differentiated by subsequent ascertainment; if it were not a union, it would be an object of conceptuality and would not be fit to be what does not abide as anything.

Khetsun Sangpo: If emptiness and intrinsic awareness were not the mode of abiding, the undifferentiable taste of union, there would still be a remainder of a subtle mind, a compounded thing. The point is that any sort of subtle mind has finished. If subtle mind had not been abandoned and still remained, it would be subject to increase and decrease, not the clear light once subtle mind has been abandoned.

Those two [emptiness and intrinsic awareness] are not in the least different in the entity of union; hence, when emptiness is uncompounded, intrinsic awareness also is uncompounded because they do not differ.

Khetsun Sangpo: Once the final mode of abiding of union, the great noumenal clear light, is realized, there is not at all any increase or decrease—advance of good attributes or stoppage of de-

fects. It is the immutable noumenon in which emptiness and intrinsic awareness do not differ in the least; once emptiness is uncompounded, intrinsic awareness also is uncompounded. This uncompounded immutable noumenon is the conclusive finality to be encountered.

*Objection:* Well then, emptiness also would be compounded because of not being different from knowing [or from intrinsic awareness] (*rig pa*).

Khetsun Sangpo: Intrinsic awareness is not impermanent, but this person is thinking of regular knowing (also called *rig pa*) which is impermanent, and thus emptiness would have to be impermanent and compounded, since, as was just said, it is not different from intrinsic awareness (*rig pa*).

*Answer:* A momentary mental awareness (*blo rig skad cig ma*) is not fit to be the noumenon of all phenomena; if that were the case, there would even be a nonaffirming negative that is the noumenon of all phenomena. [However,] the actual meaning of union in the sphere that is without the conceived objects of non-affirming negatives and trifling subjects (*chos can nyi tshe ba*) is the inexpressible, immutable mode of abiding.

Hence, [the noumenal clear light] is experienced more and more clearly in accordance with the subtle mind's power of familiarization with having the aspect of the clear light at the end of the three appearances. Again and again, similitudes of the three appearances and of the clear light are caused to dawn in manifold ways; initially [subtle mind] is coarse, and the three appearances are also coarse; there is also subtle analysis difficult to determine. Then, when conceptuality becomes more and more subtle, one must achieve final mental isolation in which the clear light becomes more and more clear. When through the power of mental isolation one moves to the actual clear light, the eight collections of consciousness are severed, and the actual clear light dawns, at which time there are no minds and mental factors, and pristine wisdom is naked. The exertionless dawning as a divine body by way of the functioning of the wind of pristine wisdom from within that pristine wisdom is a pure illusory body. The fact that aside from its being an even better similar type it does not require training is due to being without the pollution of compounded impure wind and mind. On the path of preparation the three appearances dawn from within seeking the actual clear light with a subtle mind; this dawning of a divine body with the five winds as conditions also can illustrate [that is to say, characterize] what a pure illusory body is; its own entity dawns from the power of meditative stabilization, like the clear appearance of skeletons when meditating on ugliness, and so forth. Since those are empty forms that dawn in the

perspective of the mind, there are modes of dawning separate from the body, like the great seal [body]; there are also are modes of one's own body itself dawning in the perspective of the mind as having the aspect of that [deity], like the last of the three strengths of manifestation.

Khetsun Sangpo: As mentioned earlier, when beginning cultivation of the generation-stage, there are three strengths of manifestation, starting with a phase called “manifesting as an object of mind” (*vid kyi yul du gsal*) in which the object—a divine body for instance—brightly appears to your mental consciousness. Then, there is phase called “manifesting as an object of appearance” (*snang ba'i yul du gsal*) in which even if you look with your eyes, you see it as you do with your mental consciousness. Eventually, as you meditate more and more, there is a final phase called “manifesting as an object of direct perception” (*mngon sum gyi yul du gsal*) in which the divine body becomes an object of direct perception even with the capacity to be felt as hard. These levels are accomplished through the potential of meditative stabilization in the generation-stage, but are still not the type of body achieved through the pristine wisdom clear light of the completion-stage and thus are lower than that even if they are in the category of final attributes of the generation-stage.

Nevertheless, it does not act as the support of the spirit, life, and consciousness as the always stable coarse body does; like an emanated body, a dog's head [can] appear even as a lion's and so forth.

It also is not a substantial cause of a Buddha body; it is only a method for [or comprehending] a pure illusory body in the manner of illustrating [or characterizing] it; it is merely a path for making manifest the pristine wisdom of actual perception.



# Glossary

<i>English</i>	<i>Tibetan</i>	<i>Sanskrit</i>
abbot	mkan po	
actual	rang mtshan pa	
actual clear light/ exemplified clear light	don gyi 'od gsal	
actual mode of subsisting	don gyi bzhugs tshul	
actuality/ effective actuality/ effective thing/ thing/ actuality	dngos po	bhāva
adventitious	glo bur	
appearance-perspective	snang ngo	
appearances that are signs of the clear light	rtags snang	
appearing clear light / clear light of appearance	snang ba'i 'od gsal	
apprehended-object and apprehending-subject	gzung 'dzin	
artifice/ projective artifice/ projective prowess / dynamism	rtsal	
aspect/ representation	nam pa	ākāra
awareness	blo	
bare emptiness	stong rkyang	
basal appearances	gzhi snang	
basal clear light	gzhi'i 'od gsal	
basal element/ sphere/ sphere of reality	dbyings	dhātu
basal essentially pure great clear light	gzhi ka dag 'od gsal chen po	
basal ultimate body of the noumenon	gzhi don dam chos nyid kyi sku	
body of attributes	chos sku	
body of great transference	'pho ba chen po'i sku	
causes of appearances	snang ba'i rgyu	
clear light	'od gsal	
clear light of appearance/ appearing clear light	snang ba'i 'od gsal	
coarse mental conceptualization	yid kyi kun rtog rags pa	
coarse mentality	yid rags pa	
complete within unrestricted equality	ris med mnyam pa'i ngang du rdzogs pa/mnyam rdzogs	
compounded	'dus byas	saṃskṛta
conceptual impression	rtog pa'i snang ba	
conceptuality	nam rtog	
conclusiveness	la bzla ba	
consciousness	nam shes	
construct (verb)	mngon par 'du byed pa	
construct/ sign/ mark	mtshan ma	nimitta
continuation	rgyun	
delicate clear light	srab mo'i 'od gsal	

<i>English</i>	<i>Tibetan</i>	<i>Sanskrit</i>
effective actuality/ effective thing/ thing/ actuality	dngos po	
effective thing/ effective actuality	dngos po	
effulgence of noumenal intrinsic awareness	chos nyid kyi rig gdangs	
element of attributes/ sphere of real- ity	chos kyi dbyings	dharmadhātu
emptiness	stong pa nyid	śūnyatā
empty and luminous	stong gsal	
empty forms that are appearances of the projective prowess of funda- mental mind	gnyug sems kyi rtsal snang stong gzugs	
enumerative emptiness	stong nyid nam grangs pa	
equal and complete	mnyam rdzogs	
essential purity	ka dag	
everlasting	ther zug	
exalted mind	thugs	
exists naturally	chos nyid kyi yod pa	
experiential perspective	dgongs nyams	
feeling-bliss	tshor bde	
fully qualified/ regular	rang mtshan pa	
functioning actuality/ effective thing	dngos po	
fundamental	gnyug ma	
fundamental cognition	gnyug ma'i yid	
fundamental mind	gnyug ma'i sems/ gnyug sems	
grand permanence	rtag pa chen po	
grand uncompoundedness	'dus ma byas chen	
great collection of wheels of letters	yi ge 'khor lo tshogs chen	
Great Completeness	rdzogs chen	
great equality of purity	dag mnyam chen po	
great mind	sams chen po	
Great Seal	phyag rgya chen po	mahāmudrā
hammer breaking the youthful en- cased body	gzhon nu bum sku gcag pa'i tho ba	
immutable mind	mi 'gyur ba'i sems	
in isolation	ldog cha nas	
inanimate and animate/ the stable and the moving	brtan g.yo	
incomplete	ma rdzogs pa med	
Initial Buddha	thog ma'i sangs rgyas	
integrally/ intrinsically	rang chas su	
intrinsic awareness/ knowing	rig pa	
intrinsic mind	sams nyid	
intrinsically aware emptiness	rig stong	
intrinsically aware pristine wisdom	rig pa ye shes	
intrinsically/ integrally	rang chas su	
involving constructs	mtshan bcas	samitta
I-self	nga bdag	
knowing/ intrinsic awareness	rig pa	

English	Tibetan	Sanskrit
Knowledge-Bearer	rig 'dzin	
leapover	thod rgal	
limited/ trifling	nyi tshe ba	
lotus of non-attachment	ma chags padma	
luminous and knowing	gsal rig	
manifestly constructs	mngon par 'du byed pa	
mark/ sign/ construct	mtshan ma	nimitta
master	slob dpon	
matrix-of-one-gone-to-bliss	bde gshegs snying po/ bde bar gshegs pa'i snying po	
mental consciousness	yid shes/ yid kyi nram shes	
mentality	yid	manas
metaphoric clear light	dpe'i 'od gsal	
metaphoric pristine wisdom	dpe'i ye shes	
mind	sems	
mind-basis-of-all	kun gzhi nram par shes pa	ālayavijñāna
mind-vajra	sems kyi rdo rje	
mode of abiding	gnas lugs	
momentary mental awareness	blo rig skad cig ma	
mutable blissful feeling	tshor bde 'gyur ba can	
natural innateness of mind	sems kyi lhan skyes	
natural maṇḍala	rang bzhin gyi dkyil 'khor	
natural mind of clear light	rang bzhin 'od gsal ba'i sems	
natural path	rang lam	
natural sign	rang rtags	
naturally flowing noumenon	rang bzhin bab kyi chos nyid	
naturally luminous self-arisen pristine wisdom	rang byung gi ye shes rang bzhin gyis 'od gsal ba	
non-conceptuality	nram par mi rtog pa	
not appear in experience as isolatedly different	tha dad du yan gar myong bar mi snang	
noumenal fundamental mind	chos nyid gnyug ma'i sems	
noumenal mind	chos nyid kyi sems	
noumenal mode of abiding	chos nyid kyi gnas lugs	
noumenal reasoning	chos nyid kyi rigs pa	
noumenal thusness	chos nyid de bzhin nyid	
noumenon	chos nyid	dharmatā
One-Gone-Thus	de bzhin gshegs pa	tathāgata
One-Gone-to-Bliss	bde bar gshegs pa	sugata
original basal noumenon	gdod ma gzhi yi chos nyid	
Original Lord	gdod ma'i mgon po	
ornament	rgyan	
phenomena and noumenon	chos dang chos nyid	
primeval	ye thog	
primeval basic mode of abiding	ye thog gzhi'i gnas lugs	
primeval basis	ye thog gi gzhi	
primordial buddhification	ye sangs rgyas pa	
primordial emptiness and luminosity	ye stong 'od gsal	
primordial endowment	ye ldan	

<i>English</i>	<i>Tibetan</i>	<i>Sanskrit</i>
primordially buddhified	ye nas sangs rgyas pa	
primordially enlightened	ye nas byang chub pa	
pristine wisdom	ye shes	
pristine wisdom of clear light	'od gsal ba'i ye shes	
producers of appearances	snang ba'i skyed byed	
projective artifice/ projective prowess/ artifice	rtsal	
proliferation	spros pa	prapañca
pure from the letter ka/ pure from the beginning	ka nas dag pa/ ka dag	
pure in its own essence/ essentially pure	rang ngo dag pa	
reading-transmission	bshad lung	
realization	rtogs pa	
realizational actual clear light	rtogs pa don gyi 'od gsal	
reasoning of dependence	ltos pa'i rigs pa	apekṣāyukti
reasoning of nature	chos nyid kyi rigs/rig pa	dharmatāyukti
reasoning of performance of function	bya ba byed pa'i rigs pa	
reasoning of tenable proof	'thad pas sgrub pa'i rigs pa	upapattisāadhanayukti
regular mentality	yid rang mtshan pa	
regular/ fully qualified	rang mtshan pa	
representation/ aspect	mam pa	ākāra
restricted	ris su chad pa	
restricted appearances	ris chad kyi snang ba	
sacred emptiness	stong nyid dam pa	
sciences	rig gnas	
secure haven/ stronghold	btsan sa	
self-arisen matrix	rang byung snying po	
self-arisen pristine wisdom	rang byung ye shes	
self-cognizing direct perception	rang rig mngon sum	
self-dawning	rang shar	
self-effulgence	rang mdangs	
self-knowing	rang rig	
self-luminous	rang gsal	
self-projective artifice	rang rtsal	
self-release	rang grol	
serial destruction	rjes gzhig	
sign/ construct/ mark	mtshan ma	nimitta
situation	ngang	
sphere of clear light	'od gsal ba'i dbyings	
sphere of non-proliferation	spros med kyi dbyings	
sphere of reality/ element of attributes	chos kyi dbyings	dharmadhātu
sphere/ sphere of reality/ basal element	dbyings	dhātu
spontaneity	lhun grub	
spontaneously established	lhun gyis grub pa	
sport	rol pa	
stable and the moving	brtan g.yo	

<i>English</i>	<i>Tibetan</i>	<i>Sanskrit</i>
standpoint of primordial buddhification	ye sangs rgyas pa'i dgongs pa	
standpoint/ thought/ intent/ perspective	dgongs pa	
state of mindless darkness	sems med mun pa'i gnas skabs	
subject/ substrata	chos can	
substrata/ subject	chos can	
subtle mind/ subtle mentality	yid phra ba	
teacher three bodies	ston pa sku gsum	
that endowed with the space-vajra pervading space	mkha' khyab mkha' yi rdo rje can	
thorn-apple	thang khrom/ thang phrom	dhattūra
Translated Word of Buddha	bka' 'gyur	
trifling subjects	chos can nyi tshe ba	
trifling/ limited	nyi tshe ba	
ultimate emptiness	stong nyid dam pa	
uncompounded	'dus ma byas	asamskr̥ta
unhindered	zang thal	
Victor Knowledge-Bearer	rgyal ba rig 'dzin	
visionary experience	nyams	
whole withdrawal	ril 'dzin	
without I-self	nga bdag med pa	
youthful encased body	gzhon nu bum pa'i sku	



# List of Abbreviations

- “Dharma” refers to the *sde dge* edition of the Tibetan canon published by Dharma Press: the *Nyingma Edition of the sDe-dge bKa’-’gyur and bsTan-’gyur* (Oakland, Calif.: Dharma Press, 1981).
- “Golden Reprint” refers to the *gser bris bstan ’gyur* (Sichuan, China: krung go’i mtho rim nang bstan slob gling gi bod brgyud nang bstan zhib ’jug khang, 1989).
- “Karmapa *sde dge*” refers to the *sde dge mtshal par bka’ ’gyur: A Facsimile Edition of the 18th Century Redaction of Si tu chos kyi ’byung gnas Prepared under the Direction of H.H. the 16th rgyal dbang karma pa* (Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae Chodhey Gyalwae Sungrab Partun Khang, 1977).
- “P,” standing for “Peking edition,” refers to *The Tibetan Tripitaka* (Tokyo-Kyoto: Tibetan Tripitaka Research Foundation, 1955-1962).
- “stog Palace” refers to the *Tog Palace Manuscript of the Tibetan Kanjur* (Leh, Ladakh: Smanrtsis Shesrig Dpemdzod, 1979).
- “THL” refers to The Tibetan and Himalayan Library of the University of Virginia at <http://www.thlib.org>. (The identifications in the endnotes of THL numbers for tantras are tentative.)
- “Toh” refers to *A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons*, edited by Hakuju Ui et al. (Sendai, Japan: Tohoku University, 1934), and *A Catalogue of the Tohoku University Collection of Tibetan Works on Buddhism*, edited by Yensho Kanakura et al. (Sendai, Japan: Tohoku University, 1953).
- “Tokyo *sde dge*” refers to the *sDe dge Tibetan Tripitaka—bsTan hgyur preserved at the Faculty of Letters, University of Tokyo*, edited by Z. Yamaguchi et al. (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1977-1984).





# Bibliography of Works Cited

Sūtras and tantras are listed alphabetically by English title in the first section of the bibliography. Indian and Tibetan treatises are listed alphabetically by author in the second section; other works are listed alphabetically by author in the third section. Works mentioned in the first or second section are not repeated in the third section.

## 1. SŪTRAS AND TANTRAS

### *All-Creating Monarch*

sarvadharmamahāśāntibodhicittakulayarāja

kun byed rgyal po/ chos thams cad rdzogs pa chen po byang chub kyi sems kun byed rgyal po  
THL Ng1.1.2.1

In *bka' 'gyur (sde dge par phud*, 828). TBRC W22084.97:1b1-86a7 (PDF of Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985).

### *Compilations of Indicative Verse*

udānavarga

ched du brjod pa'i tshom

In *bka' 'gyur (lha sa*, 332). TBRC W26071.72:644-778 (PDF of Lha sa: Zhol bka' 'gyur par khang, [194-]).

Peking 992, vol. 39

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### *Compendium of the Thought of the Sūtras*

mdo dgongs pa 'dus pa/ de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi dgongs pa 'dus pa'i rgyud

THL Ng2.3.3

In *rnying ma rgyud 'bum (gting skyes*). TBRC W21518.11:9-545 (PDF of Thimbu: Dingo Khyentse Rimpoche, 1975-1975).

### *Condensed Kālachakra Tantra*

śrī-kālacakra-laghu-tantra-rāja-hṛdaya-nāma

dpal dus kyi 'khor lo bsdu pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po'i snying po

In *bka' 'gyur (lha sa*, 373). TBRC W26071.79:421-478 (PDF of Lha sa: Zhol bka' 'gyur par khang, [194-]).

See *Kālachakra Tantra*.

### *Descent into Laṅkā Sūtra*

laṅkāvatārasūtra

lang kar gshegs pa'i mdo

In *bka' 'gyur (sde dge par phud*, 107). TBRC W22084.49:113-384 (PDF of Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985).

Peking 775, vol. 29

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### *Foremost Powerful Excellent Great Completeness Tantra*

rdzogs pa chen po rje btsan dam pa

THL Ng4.1.16

- In *rnying ma rgyud 'bum (gting skyes)*. TBRC W21518. 1:450-451 (PDF of Thimbu: Dingo Khy-entse Rimpoche, 1975-1975).
- General Tantra of the Great Lotus Sovereign Gone to Bliss*  
padma dbang chen bde gshegs spyi dril gyi rgyud/ de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi dgongs pa spyi dril gyi rgyud  
THL Ng2.3.4  
In *rnying ma rgyud 'bum (mtshams brag dgon pa'i bris ma)*. TBRC W21521. 16:775-800 (PDF of Thimphu: National Library, Royal Government of Bhutan, 1982).
- Great Completeness Lion of the Culmination of Artifice Tantra*  
rdzogs chen seng ge rtсал rdzogs kyi rgyud/ seng ge rtсал rdzogs chen po'i rgyud  
THL Ng1.3.3.8  
In *rnying ma rgyud 'bum (gting skyes)*. TBRC W21518.9:246-371 (PDF of Thimbu: Dingo Khy-entse Rimpoche, 1975-1975).
- Guhyasamāja Tantra*  
sarvatathāgatakāyavākiccittarahasyaguhyasamājanāmamahākālpārāja  
de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi sku gsung thugs kyi gsang chen gsang ba 'dus pa zhes bya ba brtag pa'i rgyal po chen po  
In *bka' 'gyur (sde dge par phud, 442)*. TBRC W22084.81:181-297 (PDF of Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985).  
Peking 81, vol. 3; D442, vol. ca; Dharma vol. 29
- Hevajra Tantra*  
hevajratāntrarāja  
kye'i rdo rje zhes bya ba rgyud kyi rgyal po  
In *bka' 'gyur (sde dge par phud, 417)*. TBRC W22084.80:3-28 (PDF in Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985)  
Peking 10, vol. 1  
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- Inlaid Jewels Tantra*  
nor bu phra bkod/ nor bu phra bkod rang gi don thams cad gsal bar byed pa'i rgyud  
THL Ng1.3.3.16  
In *rig 'dzin padma gling pa'i zab gter chos mdzod rin po che*. TBRC W21727.6:651-658 (PDF of Thimphu: Kunsang Tobgay, 1975-1976).
- Introduction to the Forms of Definite and Indefinite Progress Sūtra*  
niyatāniyatagatimudrāvātārasūtra  
nges pa dang mi nges par 'gro ba'i phyag rgya la 'jug pa'i mdo  
In *bstan 'gyur (sde dge par phud, 202)*. TBRC W22084.62:63a5-78a4 (PDF of Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985).  
Peking 868, vol. 34 (Toh. 202)
- Kālacakra Tantra*  
kālacakranāmatāntrarāja  
rgyud kyi rgyal po dpal dus kyi 'khor lo  
In *bka' 'gyur (sde dge par phud, 362)*. TBRC W22084.77:46-258. (PDF of Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985).  
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*Mad Elephant Tantra*

glang po rab 'bog gi rgyud

THL Ng3.1.3.3.5

In *rnying ma rgyud 'bum (gting skyes)*. TBRC W21518.19:207-296 (PDF of Thimbu: Dingo Khyentse Rimpoche, 1975-1975).

*Miraculous Secret Essence*

śrīguhyagarbhatattvaviniścaya

sgyu 'phrul gsang ba snying po; dpal gsang ba'i snying po de kho na nyid nram par nges pa

THL Ng3.1.1.8

In *bka' 'gyur (sde dge par phud, 838)*. TBRC W22084.98:110b.1-132a.7 (PDF of Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapae choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985).

*Miraculous Transcendence Great Tantra*

sgyu 'phrul thal ba'i rgyud chen po

THL Ng3.1.2.1.4

In *rnying ma rgyud 'bum (gting skyes)*. TBRC W21518.15: 429-546 (PDF of Thimbu: Dingo Khyentse Rimpoche, 1975-1975).

*Mirror of the All-Good Exalted Mind Tantra*

kun tu bzang po thugs kyi me long gi rgyud

THL Ng1.3.3.14

In *rig 'dzin padma gling pa'i zab gter chos mdzod rin po che*. TBRC W21727.6:683-698 (PDF of Thimphu: Kunsang Tobgay, 1975-1976).

*Monarch of Multitudinous Expanse Tantra*

klong chen rab 'byams rgyal po'i rgyud

THL Ng1.2.1

In *rnying ma rgyud 'bum (gting skyes)*. TBRC W21518.3:262-400 (PDF of Thimbu: Dingo Khyentse Rimpoche, 1975-1975).

*Monarch of Tantras: The Vajrasattva Magical Net*

rgyud kyi rgyal po rdo rje sems dpa' sgyu 'phrul dra ba/ rdo rje sems dpa'i sgyu 'phrul dra ba gsang ba thams cad kyi me long zhes bya ba'i rgyud

THL Ng3.1.2.1.2

In *bka' 'gyur (lha sa)*. TBRC W26071.98:429-649 (PDF of Lha sa: Zhol bka' 'gyur par khang, [194-]).

*Non-dual Conquest*

ārya-advayasamatā-vijayākhyā-vikalpa-mahārāja

gnyis med mnyam nyid nram rgyal

In *bka' 'gyur (lha sa, 789)*. TBRC W26071.96:912-1037 (Lha sa: Zhol bka' 'gyur par khang, [194-]).

*Quintessence of the View of the Great Completeness: The Broad Expanse of Space Tantra*

rdzogs pa chen po lta ba'i yang snying nam mkha' klong yangs kyi rgyud

THL Ng1.5.20

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*Sūtra Unraveling the Thought*

saṃdhinirmocanasūtra

dgongs pa nges par 'grel pa'i mdo

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Peking 774, vol. 29; Toh. 106, vol. ca; Dharma, vol. 18

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rdzogs chen nges don 'dus pa'i rgyud/ lta ba thams cad kyi snying po rin po che nam par bkod pa  
THL Ng1.5.17  
In *rnying ma rgyud 'bum* (gting skyes). TBRC W21518.7:9-117 (PDF of Thimbu: Dingo Khyentse Rimpoché, 1975-1975).
- Tantra of the Expanse of the All-Good Pristine Wisdom: Refined Gold of Great Value*  
kun tu bzang po ye shes klong gi rgyud rin chen gser gyi yang zhun/ rdzogs pa chen po nges don 'dus pa'i yang snying  
THL Ng1.5.23  
In *bai ro'i rgyud 'bum*. TBRC W21519.3:221-234 (PDF of Leh: S. W. Tashigangpa, 1971).
- Tantra of Great Luminous Meaning Devoid of Proliferation*  
spros bral don gsal chen po'i rgyud  
THL Ng1.5.1  
In *rnying ma rgyud 'bum* (mtshams brag dgon pa'i bris ma). TBRC W21521.13:2-288 (PDF of Thimphu: National Library, Royal Government of Bhutan, 1982).
- Tantra of the Great Completeness Equal to Space*  
[chos thams cad] rdzogs chen nam mkha' dang mnyam pa'i rgyud  
THL Ng1.5.24  
In *rnying ma rgyud 'bum* (mtshams brag dgon pa'i bris ma). TBRC W21521.3:721-919 (PDF of Thimphu: National Library, Royal Government of Bhutan, 1982).
- Tantra of Quintessential Instructions of the Precious Lamp of Secret Pristine Wisdom*  
ye shes gsang ba'i sgron ma rin po che man ngag gi rgyud  
THL Ng1.2.7  
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rig pa rang shar chen po'i rgyud  
THL Ng1.3.3.3  
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THL Ng1.1.3.21  
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- Tantra of Transcendent Sound*  
ratnakarashabdamahāprasāngatantra  
sgra thal 'gyur tsa ba'i rgyud/ rin po che 'byung bar byed pa sgra thal 'gyur chen po'i rgyud  
THL Ng1.3.3.2  
In *rgyud bcu bdun* (a 'dzom par ma). TBRC W1KG11703.1:3-208 (PDF of Nepal: dkar mdzes bod rigs rang skyong khul, dpal yul rdzong: a 'dzom chos sgar, 2000?).

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Anubhūtiśvarūpācārya

*Sarasvatī's Grammar Sūtra*

sārasvatavyākaraṇa / sārasvatīprakriyā

dbyangs can sgra mdo/ dbyangs can ma/ mtsho ldan ma'i brda sprod pa

In *sgra dang sdeb sbyor*. TBRC W29032:419-640 (PDF of Lan Kru'u: Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2004)

Peking 5886, vol. 148; Peking 5911, vol. 149; Peking 5912, vol. 149

Āryadeva (*'phags pa lha*, second to third century C.E.)

*Four Hundred / Treatise of Four Hundred Stanzas / Four Hundred Stanzas on the Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattvas*

catuḥśatakaśāstrakārikā

bstan bcos bzhi brgya pa zhes bya ba'i tshig le'ur byas pa

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Asaṅga (*thogs med*, fourth century)

#### Five Treatises on the Grounds

##### 1. *Grounds of Yogic Practice*

yogācārabhūmi

rnal 'byor spyod pa'i sa

==Peking 5536-5538, vols. 109-110

*Grounds of Bodhisattvas*

bodhisattvabhūmi

byang chub sems pa'i sa

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*Brief Explication of the Assertions of Our Own View*

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*Analysis of the Meaning of Fundamental Mind, Clear Light, Distinguishing the Basis, Path, and Fruit of the Great Completeness: Illumination of Intelligence*

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*Explanation of the Eight Pronouncements*

bka' brgyad nam bshad

khreng tu'u: si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2000

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*The Meaning of Fundamental Mind, Clear Light, Expressed in Accordance with the Transmission of Victor Knowledge-Bearers: Vajra Matrix*

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