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THE DIAMOND LIGHT

AN INTRODUCTION TO
TIBETAN BUDDHIST
MEDITATIONS

COMPILED BY

Janice Dean Willis



DATE DUE

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MEDITATIONS

Compiled by JANICE DEAN WILLIS

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*To my gracious Guru, Geshe Thubten Yeshe,
a living example of the Buddha's Compassion,*

And to his Guru, Geshe Rabten.

*May these most precious Bodhisattvas
Remain with us
To turn the Wheel of Dharma
Until Samsara is emptied.*

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I go for Refuge to the Buddha

I go for Refuge to the Dharma

I go for Refuge to the Sangha

*I go for Refuge to the Triple Gem so that I and all
sentient beings, my mothers
may be led to Complete and Perfect Enlightenment.*

—Tibetan Mahayana Refuge

I dreamed that a sun and a moon were in my house, but they did not shine. Then another sun and moon appeared in the East, bright and radiant. They lit up the dark sun and moon in my house and made them shining bright. Then they [the dark ones] rose up and united with the sun and the moon in the East. The whole universe was thus illuminated.

*—The dream of Sahle Aui,
Milarepa's female devotee*

*The light of the Eastern dawn is diamond light.
Like the diamond, it is brilliant and everlasting;
Like the vajra [diamond], it is indestructible wisdom.
May the indestructible and all-encompassing wisdom
Of the Vajrayana, the Diamond Vehicle,
Illumine our dark world with the Diamond Light.*

PREFACE

*There is one Lord revealed in many scriptures,
Who becomes clearly manifest at your wish.*

—Saraha, Dohakosa

This is a short book on Tibetan Buddhist meditational practice. It is intended for those who are genuinely interested in the Buddhist faith and, as such, are seeking more knowledge of it. It is hoped that it reaches the hands of such “seekers of Dharma.” It is not, therefore, primarily intended for the scholar or student of Buddhist philosophy; and it is based on the premise that if one is to learn what Buddhism is, he must do so by studying its heart, which is to say, he must have some idea of its practice. It is meditation which occupies the central position in the practice of Buddhism. Therefore, it is hoped that this collection of meditations may instruct through example.

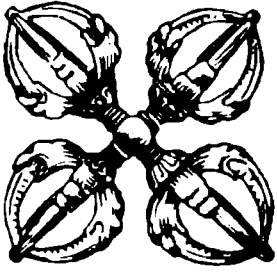
It is further hoped that from reading this work the reader may not only get the feel of Buddhist meditations in general but may also be able to get a feeling for the distinctly Tibetan character of the practices presented here. No Tibetan Buddhist would say that he professed a religion which was in any way different from that of his Buddhist contemporaries in any other Buddhist country. (The claim that “Lamaism” is an elabora-

tion and strictly esoteric form of Buddhism is as misleading as the term itself, which is totally foreign to Tibetans.) However, Tibetans have developed very distinct forms of, and methods for, practicing meditation. The concern of this book is to present some of these distinctly Tibetan meditations.

Part II includes some comparisons between the meditational practices of the Tibetan and the Theravadin traditions of Buddhism, because I have been fortunate enough to take teaching from Thai and Burmese monks (of the Theravada), as well as from Tibetan lamas (“lama” simply means *teacher*); and because there is much we can learn from the Sangha (monkhood) of both these traditions.

In the ninth century, Padma Sambhava, who established Buddhism in Tibet, prophesied, “When the iron bird flies, the Dharma will go West.” May this work be a small contribution toward that, for the benefit of all beings.

SARVAMANGALAM



PART ONE

*The Framework
of Tibetan Practice*

. . . Wherefore, if ye think to practice the holy doctrine:
Make your supplication to the threefold most precious
 jewel, the Refuge of the faith,
And meditate upon the sixfold beings, as having formerly
Engendered you in the round of transmigration.
Make oblations to your lord and teacher,
Give alms to the poor and needy,
And intend virtue for the benefit of mankind.
Meditate continually upon the uncertainty of the
 hour of death.
Believe your own bodies to be the tutelary deity,
And act according to the words of power
 of secret utterance.
Meditate upon your knowledge as the void that passes
 all understanding,
And continually be conscious of the truth.

—Milarepa

I | THE PURPOSE OF MEDITATION

*Make for yourself an island, strive quickly, be wise.
When your impurities are purged and you are free
from sin, you will not again enter into birth and old age.
—Dhammapada, 238*

Our Original Face: A Rebirth Story

Before the entrance of man into this (phenomenal) world,¹ the Mind rests in ultimate Stillness.² If there is a stirring in this Stillness, a thought arises, disturbing the Still. The thought expresses clinging,³ because it is a disturbance of the Still. Simultaneously it expresses the wish to be born, to enter this world . . . for craving is attachment to Ego, and this world is the home in which disturbance lives.

Two people, a man and a woman, sunk already deep into this phenomenal world, co-mingle and an embryo is brought into existence.⁴ The embryo is this world's receptacle for the thought which arose of the Stillness. A baby is born, his outer shell (his physical body) being the sole

1. Samsara.

2. This "Stillness" is the basis of both confusion (i.e., avidya) and Enlightenment.

3. Sanskrit, upadana; Tibetan, len-pa.

4. Sanskrit, bhava; Tibetan, srid-pa.

creation of his parents. But in his mind is contained the germ of the One State (Stillness) before the original disturbance.

If he works hard to unveil the germ and so discover the Mind from which he has separated himself at birth, and from which he sprang, he finally comes to perceive his “original face” before he was born. If he forgets or ignores the germ which could explain his origin, he becomes tied to the cycle of births, lives, and deaths.⁵ He continually dies from the thirst for life.⁶

Concentrated effort via meditation enables one to cause the return to the Stillness.⁷ When all thoughts are stilled, rebirth is finished, for craving for and attachment to this phenomenal world are no more. And one enters again and forever the state of the Unborn, or the Original Face.

The practice of meditation is central to Buddhism, no matter in which country or in which sect. The whole force of Buddhist teaching lies in its urging beings to discover their own *true natures*. In Buddhism, dogmatism is replaced with the injunction to “work out your [own] salvation,” and rather than set forth theories about the Discovery itself, its aim is only to show the ways which may be used to come to that salvation. It is for this reason that in Buddhism there is so much emphasis on the “Way to the Goal” and on the “Path to Enlightenment.” Buddhism sets forth methods and prescribes paths to aid beings to their own salvation.

The Buddha Gautama refused to engage in discussions of “metaphysical problems” with his disciples. When asked to do so, his only response was silence; and when asked to explain his silence, he responded that he avoided speculation, taught only what was necessary for man’s deliverance, and taught only what he knew to be absolutely true of the Way, since it was the very Way by which he himself had attained to Complete and Perfect Enlightenment.

And so Gautama is called the “Truth-finder” and the “Way-shower,” as in the following passage:

A Truth-finder, monks, one perfected, fully awakened, causes a Way to arise which had not arisen before; he brings about a Way not brought about before; he proclaims a Way not proclaimed before. He is a knower of the Way, understander of

5. Sanskrit, jara-marana; Tibetan, rga-shi.

6. Sanskrit, trsna; Tibetan, sred-pa.

7. The “Stillness” here meant is the transformed avidya; avidya having understood itself, becoming thereby prajna, i.e., wisdom.

the Way, skilled in the Way. And now his disciples, monks, are wayfarers who follow after him.⁸

The core of his teachings, both as a Truth-finder and as a Way-shower, can be summed into the simple set of truths which serve as Buddhism's very foundation. These are the "Four Noble Truths." The Noble Truths are:

- 1) the Truth of suffering,
- 2) the Truth of the cause of suffering,
- 3) the Truth of the cessation of suffering, and
- 4) the Truth of the Path which leads to the cessation of suffering.

That there is suffering in this world is a truth apparent to almost everyone. Men are born and die, and within the span of their lifetimes experience much misery. Happy times, too, are somehow unstable and clouded by the knowledge of their fleeting and ephemeral character. Almost anyone who gives this some thought will agree that it is so and, having done so, will understand another of the principles of Buddhist doctrine, namely, the reality and suffering of *impermanence*. There is a beautiful description of the "Buddha's Pity for Mankind" which enumerates many of the contents of man's suffering. I will quote it in part:

My children,

The Enlightened One, because he saw Mankind drowning in the Great Sea of Birth, Death and Sorrow, and longed to save them,

For this he was moved to pity.

Because he saw the men of the world straying in false paths, and none to guide them,

For this he was moved to pity.

Because he saw them fettered to their wealth, their wives, and their children, knowing not how to cast them aside,

For this he was moved to pity.

Because he saw them doing evil with hand, heart, and tongue, and many times receiving the bitter fruits of sin, yet ever yielding to their desires,

8. *The Living Thoughts of Gautama the Buddha*. A. K. Coomaraswamy and I. B. Horner. Cassell, 1948. P. 182.

For this he was moved to pity.

Because he saw them afraid of birth, old age, and death, yet still pursuing the works that lead to birth, old age, and death,
For this he was moved to pity.⁹

The Buddha has always given two causes for rebirth¹⁰ and its consequent suffering, namely, ignorance and desire. In the *Vissuddhi-Magga* (XXVII), the Buddha Gautama says:

O priests, it is because the fool is blinded by ignorance and joined to desire that thus his body has come to be. Such is the origin not merely of one's own body, but also of name and form existing outside. Verily it is in dependence on these two, ignorance and desire, that arise contact and the six organs of sense, and that the fool experiences happiness and misery.

Buddhism teaches that it is possible to put an end to both rebirth and its consequent suffering. The *cessation of suffering*, according to the Buddha, is “the complete extinction of [sensuous] Craving, the rejection, dispelling, freeing, getting rid of it.” But to bring about this extinction of craving is not an easy task. In order to completely destroy craving for this phenomenal world, one must first be able to view the world as it really is. The Buddhist tradition might explain the problem in the following way: Man attempts to create the world both outside and inside himself. He does not simply view it as it is, but *imposes* his own ideas and judgments upon it. These subjective impositions veil his view of the truth. Because this veiling has been done through thousands of lifetimes, it is a very familiar creation. It is so familiar that man thinks that the truth is actually as *he* sees it. It is in order to destroy these impositions one by one that one meditates, so that ultimately the view of the truth itself becomes totally unobstructed.

Meditation is the Path to one's own true view of the truth. It is the Way to Enlightenment, the Path taken by all the Buddhas. His Holiness, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, explains:

9. *Buddhist Texts through the Ages*. Edward Conze, ed. Bruno Cassirer, Oxford, 1954. P. 207.

10. Sanskrit, *jati*; Tibetan, *skye-ba*.

The minds of beings are, in reality, always void, being really not-self-nature. This natural voidness of the mind is variously called “the lineage of the self-existent,” “the lineage of the Buddhas,” “the seed of the Buddhas,” or “the womb of the Tathagatas,” this last name being found in many Mahayana scriptures. This Buddha-lineage exists in the minds of all beings and it is for this reason that all beings are able (given suitable conditions) to attain to Buddhahood.¹¹

The Scriptures mention many advantages and virtues of meditation, and I quote a section of one here:

Secluded meditation has many virtues. All the Tathagatas have won their all-knowledge in a state of secluded meditation, and, even after their enlightenment, they have continued to cultivate meditation in the recollection of the benefits it brought to them in the past

There are, in fact, twenty-eight advantages to be gained from secluded meditation, and they are the reason why the Tathagatas have devoted themselves to it. They are as follows: secluded meditation guards him who meditates, lengthens his life, gives him strength, and shuts out faults; it removes ill-fame, and leads to good repute; it drives out discontent, and makes for contentment; it removes fear, and gives confidence; it removes sloth and generates vigour; it removes greed, hate, and delusion; it slays pride, breaks up preoccupations, makes thought one-pointed, softens the mind, generates gladness, makes one venerable, gives rise to much profit, makes one worthy of homage, brings exuberant joy, causes delight, shows the own-being of all conditioned things, abolishes rebirth in the world of becoming, and it bestows all the benefits of an ascetic life. These are the twenty-eight advantages of meditation which induce the Tathagatas to practice it.¹²

According to the Buddhist tradition, Buddha showed some 84,000 different Paths (of practice) to Enlightenment, the final one being made

11. *The Opening of the Wisdom Eye*. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama. Bangkok. P. 90.

12. *Buddhist Scriptures*. Trans. Edward Conze. Penguin Classics, 1959. Pp. 99–100.

evident in the simple gesture of holding up a flower.¹³ Though meditation is central to all Buddhism, its practice takes many differing forms. The figure given above is not to be taken literally, but to suggest that the Buddha has given a method of practice suited to all individuals, according to their individual abilities and natural inclinations. Out of the vast canon of “sutra” (literally, Buddha’s words), many practices have been extracted and adopted by the different schools and sects. So, one may enter a sect which practices spending months meditating in a cemetery to increase aversion to worldly life and destroy attachment to ego; or one may enter sects which emphasize much chanting and reciting of sutra; one may work with hau’tou or koans, or one may take “ear-whispered” instructions and go into absolute retreat high in the Himalayas. Yet, all the practices have the same goal: Deliverance, Nirvana, Enlightenment.

Within this framework of belief—both religio-mystic and psychological—the practice of Tibetan meditation takes place. Here I will be attempting to describe some of the dynamics of the Tibetan practice. However, the aim is never merely to talk about meditation, but rather to realize the results of its practice.

13. This gesture spearheaded the Enlightenment of Mahakasyapa, the First Patriarch of Zen Buddhism, and served as the foundation for Zen’s method of “direct practice.”

II | THE REFUGE

*We take refuge in the Buddha,
We take refuge in the Dharma,
We take refuge in the Sangha,
We take refuge in the Triple Gem within ourselves.*

Before going further, it is necessary that some consideration be given to the very important notion of “taking Refuge” as it relates to the Buddhist faith. The Refuge, a strengthening prayer and reassurance in the aim of practice, must precede any Buddhist action, of whatever sect or country. When one wishes to become a lay Buddhist, taking the Refuge must be the first act. Since the Refuge is so central to Buddhist practice, it is very important that its meaning be fully understood. This is especially true for Westerners. For this reason, I will attempt to explain the meaning of taking Refuge.

When one takes Buddhist Refuge, he goes for Refuge to the Triple Gem,¹ the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. He goes for Refuge to these three until his own “Great Awakening,” i.e., Enlightenment. However, the “Three Jewels,” as they are often called, should not be taken to be outside objects of worship. A correct understanding of the Refuge

1. Sanskrit, tri-ratna; Tibetan, dkon-mchog gsum hdus (the three most precious objects of worship).

shows that when one takes the Refuge one puts his full trust in the (future) unfolding of his own true nature and, therefore, full trust in his own mind to lead to that unfolding.

According to Buddhist tradition, the Three Jewels may be defined in the following way:

The *Buddha*²—apart from its reference to Gautama, the founder of the Buddhist religion some 2500 years ago—means “the highest being, the one completely free of all illusion and delusion.” “Buddha” is also the title given to “one who is fully awakened.” Yet the term does not designate a being, but rather a (mental) state of being, a way of existing. When one takes Refuge in Buddha, he is taking Refuge in Gautama Buddha; but he is also taking Refuge, i.e., placing trust, in all beings who possess this perfect way of existing. There have been and are and will be many, many Buddhas, as beings awaken to the truth of and the purity of their own minds.

The *Dharma*³ designates the whole of the teachings (and written doctrine) of Gautama (as the embodiment of all Buddhas). When one takes Refuge in the Dharma, he is not bowing before Scriptures as physical objects (of this world); but rather he is placing trust in the teachings themselves, which are “the full realization of the Right Path [to Enlightenment].” The Dharma means the very way to Enlightenment itself, for it is what has been taught by one who was himself Enlightened.

The *Sangha*⁴ is not limited to the order of monks, but more specifically denotes “those who have entered upon the Path to Enlightenment.” (Tibetan Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism in general, in fact, recognize two Sanghas: the High, Holy Sangha composed of those beings who attained Enlightenment while contemporary with Gautama Buddha; and the Sangha, meaning those beings who entered upon the Path following the disappearance of Gautama.) When one takes Refuge in the Sangha, he is placing trust in the help of all beings—the monkhood in particular, since they are skilled in the Method of practice—who can truly and competently aid him to his own Great Awakening.

The Buddha, then, is the title denoting the state of Complete and Perfect Enlightenment; the Dharma is the (recorded) realization (i.e., the Way) which guides one to this Enlightenment; and the Sangha is

2. Tibetan, Sangs-rgyas.

3. Tibetan, Chos.

4. Tibetan, Dge-'hdun.

the community of beings who either have Awakened to this State or are on the Path to it.

When one takes Buddhist Refuge, therefore, he is expressing faith in his own realization of the Three Jewels. The Refuge is not aimed at the worshiping of outside objects. It is an expression of faith in the Great Awakening actually occurring within one's own mind. This is the most precious object of faith, and it resides within each of us.



The Sangha. Here, the Holy Sangha of the Gelugpa Sect. The central figure is Gautama Buddha. He is surrounded by the Holy masters of the Khadampa Sect (founded by Atisa), and the Gelugpa Sect (the Reform Sect founded by T'song Khapa).

III | THE TOOLS OF TIBETAN PRACTICE: PROSTRATIONS, MANTRA, MUDRA, YANTRA, AND MANDALA

*The disciples of Gautama are always well awake;
Their minds, day and night, delight in meditation.
—Dhammapada, 301*

There are several distinct tools, or aids, employed in the practice of Tibetan Buddhist meditation. These aids may take the form of prostrations, mantra, mudra, yantra, or mandala; and certain practices may require their separate use or their use in combinations. I shall try to describe them here.

Prostrations

Prostrations are specific physical ways of paying homage to the Buddha and Triple Gem. The use of prostrations is found in both the Theravada and Mahayana schools, but their form is most exaggerated in the Tibetan sects, where the prostrator completely extends his body, his forehead touching the ground or floor, and his arms and legs extended to their maximum lengths. Prostrations are always accompanied by

specific prayers, and the action itself is always of a spiritual nature.

Performing prostrations, according to the tradition, has several uses, the most important of which are that it generates humility in the one who prostrates and it causes the Bodhicitta, or Enlightenment Mind, to arise (because the prayers which accompany prostrations are always prayers for the deliverance of all beings).

For some of the sects of Tibetan Buddhism, a certain number of prostrations must be completed before a disciple can take up further practices. Sometimes prostrations are prerequisite to receiving initiations into any of the higher Vajrayana meditations, it being the general practice of one particular sect that a disciple first complete 100,000 full prostrations.

Mantra¹

Mantra is a repeated mental or oral utterance of a spiritual sound. As the sound has religious meaning, it is not equivalent to the mere repetition of sounds or words. My Guru explained, “Mantra is like fire. It burns away all negativities [defilements]. Mantra is very powerful because it is very blessed. From the very beginning of practice until the Enlightenment State is reached, everything is included within mantra.” Therefore, when one receives a mantra, in initiation from a Guru, it is very potent indeed.

The fact that mantras are of this nature must be borne in mind by a newcomer to Eastern religious practice, because he often tends to associate a mantra’s literal meaning with its efficacy. This only results in confusion. It is quite true that most mantras can, more or less, be rendered into literal translations, which are more or less meaningful according to grammatical rules; but it is certainly not true that the mantra’s power has any close connection with, and certainly no dependence upon, this literal meaning. For example, the mantra “OM MUNI MUNI MAHAMUNI SAKYAMUNI SWAHA” can be given a literal translation as soon as one learns that “muni” means sage or ascetic. This mantra might then be rendered, “Hail the Ascetic, the Greatest of all Ascetics, the Ascetic of Sakya.” (Gautama Buddha came from the caste of Ksatriya, the house of Sakya.) Understood in this literal sense, this mantra is a devotional saying, an expression of deep faith in the Buddha—and this is certainly true. Yet

1. Tibetan, snags.

the mantra's meaning and efficacy go far beyond that, and far beyond the power of language to capture.

It should not be denied that much of a mantra's power is directly related to the reciter's belief in its blessings. The Buddhist yogi C. M. Chen has related a short story which bears on this:

Once, a Chinese Tantric guru imparted to his disciple the mantra of Avalokitesvara; but instead of giving it as the usual sounds, he gave it as: OM MANI PADME NYU. But this disciple was very faithful to his master and very earnest in his practice. He repeated the mantra more than 10,000,000 times, and above his roof appeared a circle of white light. Now it happened that a scholar-guru of the Tantric school was passing by and saw this holy manifestation. He thought to himself: "there must be someone here well practiced in the tantra," and went to that disciple's quarters. Then the scholar asked the practitioner what was his object of meditation. The faithful disciple said: "The mantra of Avalokitesvara, OM MANI PADME NYU." Then the scholar replied, "Your guru is wrong, the mantra is: OM MANI PADME HUM." "Oh yes, I am sure you are right, being such a learned teacher. Thank you for correcting me." Then, the practitioner started repeating the mantra correctly. But his mind was now disturbed by some doubt, and the circle of light over his hut had disappeared.²

Yet faith is not the only element which makes mantra powerful. There are many levels to its meaning. One of the most common Tibetan mantras, "OM MANI PADME HUM," can serve to illustrate this point. A literal translation of the mantra can be given as "Hail, the Jewel in the Lotus."³ But the Tibetans tell the story of the mantra's efficacy in the following way: "OM MANI PADME HUM" is the mantra of Lord Chenresig (Sanskrit, Avalokitesvara), the beneficent lord who has vowed to save all beings without exception. These beings, according to Buddhist

2. *Buddhist Meditation*. C. M. Chen. Kalimpong, 1960. P. 259.
3. It is interesting to note that one of the most common mantras among the Japanese lay Buddhists is "NAM MYO HO RENGYE KYO," which literally is a veneration of the sutra entitled "The Sadharma Pundarika Sutra" ("The Sutra of the Good Law of the White Lotus"). It is rendered by lay Buddhists as "Out of the Darkness Comes the Lotus." (The lotus is symbolic in Buddhist iconography of the mind, or the receptacle for the jewel of Enlightenment.)

tradition, inhabit the six realms [or lokas], all of which are within Samsara. With each devoted recitation of His mantra, certain psychical events take place: when we utter “OM,” this sound pierces to the realm of the gods, offering blessings [of salvation] there; when we say “MA,” the sound pierces to the realm of the Asuras; “NI” is the sound which blesses the realm of men; and so on, until the six realms in their entirety have been blessed, and [because of our recitation] return [to us] the blessing.

The mantra’s power is also formulated in the following way:

By OM the gate of birth among the gods is closed; by MA the gate of birth among Asuras is closed; by NI the gate of birth among men is closed; by PAD the gate of birth among brute beasts is closed; by ME the gate of birth among the Pretas is closed, and by HUM the gate of birth in the netherworld is closed. These syllables can empty the realm of the six classes of beings. Understand it well, remember them, repeat them, impress them well upon your mind!

But mantra is even much more than this. As a systematic tool of meditation, its power is many-leveled and very great. On the lowest level, recitation of mantra cuts off distracting thoughts and “plants seeds of good karma.” This means that when one thinks good thoughts one-pointedly (i.e., recites mantra), one cannot at the same time think evil thoughts, or thoughts which would “plant seeds of bad karma.”

On the middle levels, mantra is symbolic of cosmic potentialities and the expression and life of the universe itself. On the higher levels, the true efficacy of mantra is realized when one gains a “oneness” with the universe. This oneness is, of course, beyond the scope of mere language.

Much of the power of a mantra is transmitted to the disciple in the mystic ceremony of initiation. But its true efficacy can only be known by one who has earnestly used it and has, thereby, gained its realization.

Mudra⁴

“Mudra” means the specific positions of the fingers, hands, or body in meditative practice. It may be practiced only with certain higher

4. Tibetan, phyag-rgya.

practices. The Tibetans list two kinds of mudra: Ngag-gi phyag-rgya (pronounced “chag-gya”), the mudra of speech, which consists in using mystic language and signs; and Yid-kyi phyag-rgya, the mudra of the mind, which is meditation on the deity. The first type of mudra mentioned here is in actuality continuous mantra. To understand the use of it, say, in the practice of using hand mudras, one must first know that each finger of the hand denotes a different color (which is associated with the different Dhyanī Buddhas and the Five Wisdoms). Each finger also represents a mantric syllable, as well as one of the five elements (space, air, earth, fire and water). The mudra’s meaning changes according to the different combinations of the fingers and the positions of the hands themselves. The teaching on mudra is the most “secret” of the secret methods of practice, and to learn of its proper use, one must receive certain initiations from a competent Guru.

Yantra

Yantra are the visualizations, or mental images visualized, during meditation. Special note should be taken of the use of yantra in Tibetan meditational practice, as it is quite a distinctive element in the Tibetan method. The meditator is instructed to visualize a particular mental image and to concentrate upon it. By “visualize” the Tibetans most certainly do not mean *imagine*. Visualizing in the meditation practice is a very strict discipline; it is *mind yoga*. One must develop the ability to create within his mind an image of a particular deity, to see it very clearly in its every detail, and to concentrate upon it for long periods of time.

The real practice of Tibetan meditation revolves around this type of visualizing. The method, or system, of Tibetan meditation works in the following way: There are many different yantra, or mental images, of deities. (The deities each represent a different aspect of the Buddha Nature, that is, Buddha’s compassion, His wisdom, power, etc.) Such images have been described (and iconographed) by the Buddha Himself. Each yantra of a deity—if visualized long enough and under proper conditions—is capable of imparting a certain “Siddhi,” or realization, to the meditator who concentrates upon it. Each different deity (Tibetan, yidam) teaches a specific realization, or truth. Therefore, one may meditate on only

one yantra, in an attempt to gain the realization of that particular yidam; or he may “graduate” to other visualizations as he progresses, or as his Guru determines.

The realization of a given truth or Siddhi, in the practice of Tibetan meditation, is based partially upon one’s ability to use visualization and yantra. The actual attainment of the realization occurs on a mystic level of experience; such that when one is able to perfectly visualize every detail of a given yidam, then one comes to understand the truth of the yantra. Therefore, he gains the realization taught by that yidam. Having done this, he is said to have become one with the yidam itself. (One should remember that yidams are *not* self-existing entities in themselves. They represent aspects of the Enlightened Mind, i.e., Buddha.)

One last point may illustrate the power of yantra in Tibetan tantric practice. It is that the “thangka,” the famed temple painting of the Tibetans, is, in fact, a painted meditative visualization of a very high or enlightened lama. If one is capable of painting a very powerful thangka, this is so because he has *realized* the thangka’s main image’s (i.e., its yidam) truth. This explains why only the highest lamas (i.e., those most skilled in meditation practice) are able to paint the superb traditional Tibetan thangkas. It also explains why thangkas are so often veiled to the general view of the public. Thangkas are powerful examples of yantra. They are not merely paintings; they are glimpses into the Enlightened Mind.

Mandala⁵

Mandalas are models (or diagrams) “of the Universe,” or “of Reality,” in Tibetan practice, and they include figures of the Buddhist deities. They are usually square, though they may be round, and are usually between one and two yards square in size. Tibetan mandalas are made of powdered sands in various colors, and their construction is very painstakingly executed. Mandalas are always viewed as three-dimensional objects. Usually they are described in terms of being “like pyramids, possessing at least three levels” (which correspond to the “Three Doors” of the Buddhist description of “personality”; i.e., body, speech, and mind).

5. Tibetan, khor-lo.

The mandala figures most prominently into the highest practices of the Vajrayana, those of the Anuttara-Yoga Tantra. (One of its uses in such initiations is given on pages 39–40.) Within these higher stages of Vajrayana practice, the mandala functions on several levels. Two such levels can be discussed relating to what the Tibetans call “Mahayoga,” i.e., the practice of the “Great Yoga.” According to tantric practice, there are two stages of practice, corresponding to the two stages of the Great Yoga: 1) “bsked-rim yoga,” or the preliminary practice, and 2) “rd’zogs-rim yoga,” or the accomplished or perfected practice. In the first, the Vajra disciple practices with an external (i.e., a model) mandala; in the second, he continually dwells within the mandala itself. Just as the human body and the world are mandalas in imagination and theory in the preliminary practice, in the accomplished practice this truth is realized continually; and all one’s surroundings as well as one’s own body are seen to be the components of the particular mandala which is central to the meditation practice.

All these tools of Tibetan meditation can be grouped in such a way that they correspond to the “Three Doors of one’s personality,” body, speech, and mind. So, one sees that mudra and prostrations involve the door of the body, whose symbolic mantra is “OM”; that mantra involves the door of speech, which is symbolized by “AH”; and that yantra and mandala involve the door of the mind, which is “HUM.”

These tools form a distinctive feature of the Tibetan method of meditation. Their meanings are much more profound than can be suggested here, and one must learn of their successive stages of meaning from a Guru.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GURU, AND THE INITIATION “WONG”

*I go for refuge to the Guru
I go for refuge to the Buddha
I go for refuge to the Dharma
I go for refuge to the Sangha*

It is characteristic of Tibetan meditational practices (and especially of higher Vajrayana practices) that a fourth object is added to the traditional formulation of the refuge. That object is the Guru, or Lama (teacher). The importance of the Guru as refuge cannot be overstressed. As the object of refuge, the Guru is listed even above the Buddha, for without the Guru, skilled in the Method of practice, the Buddha cannot awaken within us.

There is a very common Tibetan prayer to the Guru, which goes:

*Sangs-rgyas thams-chad 'hdus-pa'i sku
Dorje-'hdzin-pa'i ngo-wo nyid
Dkon-mchog-gsum gyi tse-wa ste
bLama nam-la skyabs-su-mchis*

One Guru¹ first explained and then translated it in the following way:

1. Geshe Rabten, Third Tutor to His Holiness, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama.

“All the Buddhas have the desire to aid us. But we are not able to see them or communicate with them—as we do with the Guru.

“Dorje Chang, Vajradhara, and Samantabhadra² are all names of Buddha, of all Buddhas. Vajra [diamond] is indestructible; since all the Buddhas have unveiled their minds of klesa [mental defilements], the spirit of all the Buddhas is indestructible, like the dorje [Tibetan, diamond]. The Guru is the essence of Vajradhara, which means ‘holding the diamond.’

“When one attains the State of Buddha, one attains the Triple Gem. The Guru is the root of the Triple Gem. Therefore, this prayer means:

“I go for refuge to all my Gurus,
who are the root of the Triple Gem,
who are the only essence of Vajradhara,
who are the gathered forms of all the Buddhas.’”

The tradition of the Guru-disciple relationship, which has its origin in the ancient Indian practice, is very strictly observed in the practice of Tibetan Buddhism. One sees this strictness especially in the relationship between the Vajra Guru and one who has entered upon the Vajrayana Path. Such a disciple may be asked even to do something seemingly not in accordance with traditional doctrine, for in this type of relationship all success depends upon complete loyalty to and trust in one’s Guru. (In certain Vajrayana texts, disrespect to one’s Guru is listed as a greater failure than disrespect to the Buddha’s words.)³

But the most important reason why the Guru is so indispensable is a more subtle matter, particularly as it concerns the practice of meditation and advancement and progress along the Tantric Path. It concerns the direct transmission of power to practice certain meditations. When a disciple is “initiated” into a certain meditation, a Guru gives him, through “direct transmission” an “empowerment” to practice that meditation successfully. The Tibetan term “dWang” (pronounced “wong”), which is usually translated as “initiation,” more accurately means “empowerment,” or the bestowing of power. At this point, it may be helpful to describe the Tibetan “wong” ceremony.

2. Dorje Chang is Tibetan for the Sanskrit Vajradhara. Samantabhadra is Sanskrit and is applied as a name for the power of the Dharmakaya itself.

3. See the Sakya-pa text of the Root and Branch Vows and Downfalls on pages 100–106.

1. The Vajra Guru has already accomplished, i.e., realized the Truth of, any meditation he may initiate a disciple into (or he has come near to its full realization). Therefore, he is able to be the disciple's guide. When a disciple takes initiation into the practice of any of the first three classes of meditation—*kriya*, *charya*, or *yoga* practice—a “wong” ceremony is performed. The initiate comes before his Guru with deep faith in his heart, with much desire to attain the Siddhis (realizations) of the particular practice, and with much humility before the power of his Guru and of the Buddha. The Guru first blesses the initiate with certain chants. Then he describes the practice of the meditation. This usually means that he gives a detailed description of the *visualization* of the main deity of the meditation, i.e., the *yidam*. After giving this description, the real initiation begins. As the heart of any Tibetan practice centers around the recitation of the mantra used in that meditation, the secret, or “mystic,” ceremony begins when the Guru is about to utter the mantra before his disciple. At the beginning of this major part of the ceremony, the Guru takes up into

his hands the bell (Tibetan, dril-bu, pronounced “til-pu”), the sound of which symbolizes the Truth, or Sunyata¹ itself; and the dorje,² which symbolizes the “diamond Bodhisattva’s mind.” These two ritual instruments are part of every initiation ceremony. The Guru’s holding them means that he is able to impart the true teachings of the practice to his disciples.

Holding the dorje and bell in a particular mudra, the Guru recites the mantra; then he and his disciple recite it together. It is usually the practice to recite a given mantra at least three times during this ceremony. Having completed the recitation of the mantra, the Guru rings the bell and recites other “protective” mantras and blessings for the disciple’s successful practice of the meditation. The ceremony then ends, and the disciple retires to begin the practice of the meditation.

2. The initiations into the highest type of practice, i.e., into the Anuttara-Yoga practices, are much more “ritualistic” and much more secret than those of the first three classes. I know very little of how the actual “wong” is performed, but a few things may be said here: The disciple must tell no one of the time and place of the initiation ceremony. In utter secrecy, he goes to the appointed place at the time instructed by his Guru. His Guru, too, has been preparing for the initiation in secret. The Anuttara practices all involve the use of the mandala, so one of the things the Guru has done is to carefully construct the particular mandala associated with that meditation. He also prepares other articles of initiation, for example, the “eight auspicious offerings”: water for mouth, water for feet, incense, flowers, perfume, light, music, and food.

The disciple is allowed to enter the place of initiation (often after several tests of his earnestness). The practice is described to him and, as the mystic ceremony begins, he is told the mantra and shown the mandala. It is reported that after seeing the mandala, the disciple usually sees a vision, just above the actual (model) mandala. The Guru inquires of the disciple what he has seen, and according to his response, the Guru prescribes any special practice that the disciple must also follow as he medi-

1. Tibetan, sTong-pa nyid. The name denotes the Truth of the Void nature, i.e., the non-self-existing nature, of all things.

2. The dorje meant here is a brass scepter approximately five to six inches long whose five prongs, curved at each end, represent the Five Wisdoms possessed of all Buddhas.

tates. After receiving such an initiation, the disciple usually retires into secluded retreat to begin his practice.

Sometimes, in this type of initiation, the Guru gives the disciples two reeds, a short and a long one, at the conclusion of the first part of the ceremony. The disciple is instructed to sleep upon the reeds, the long one under his body, and the short one under his head. Doing this induces certain dreams to come to the disciple. The following morning the disciple reports his dream to his Guru, and on the basis of the dream report the Guru assigns further practice.

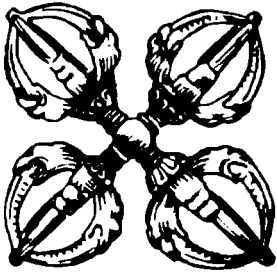
Because of the very spiritual and mystic character of the “wong” ceremonies, and because their nature involves an “empowerment,” one must have a competent Guru. During the initiation, the Guru transmits the power to practice the meditation so that the disciple may make progress in its practice, and may realize the Truth to be gained from the practice. Having gone through such an initiation, the disciple constantly feels the help and assistance of the Guru near to him, because the Guru, as the deity Himself, has prayed for his success. Not only is the Guru able to guide the disciple because he has accomplished the practice, but also because *he has accomplished it*, the Guru is himself the very deity of the meditation. During the mystic “wong” ceremony, not the Guru but the deity Himself initiates the disciple—the deity speaks and acts through the Guru. When one takes initiation into the meditation of Dorje Sempa, during the ceremony his Guru actually becomes Dorje Sempa. And so, as one practices the meditation, he is assured that the deity which he visualizes is actually helping him to attain, and praying for, his success in his practice. The disciple knows this to be true. He comes to realize it as he realizes that he has already seen and been initiated into the practice by the yidam himself, acting through his Guru. This is the realization in the disciple’s own experience that the Guru is the “embodiment of all the Buddhas.”

As one begins the Path of Practice, therefore, the most important concern is choosing a competent Guru. About choosing a Guru, His Holiness, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, has said the following:

One should always have a teacher if one wishes to practice meditation. It is desirable even if one wishes to study a Buddhist treatise to have a teacher to guide one in the tradition;

but it is nearly always necessary in meditation practice. The prime mark of a good teacher is that he has already accomplished whatever he teaches. Robes and ritual fascinate people, but these are not necessarily marks of a teacher. What is necessary for certain progress along the Path leading to Enlightenment, is that one receives guidance at the hand of a teacher who has already gone along the Path, if not to the end, then at least to within sight of the end.³

3. *The Opening of the Wisdom Eye*. P. 128.



PART TWO

The Actual Practice

VI | THE ACTUAL PRACTICE

*Self-manifestation is the Buddha, the One originally
existing;*

So do not seek the Accomplished One in other places.

—Rechungma,

female devotee to Milarepa

The Importance of Mental Attitude

When one begins the practice of meditation, the most important concern—aside from proper posture and breathing—is one's mental attitude. Even before taking the refuge, the meditator must think of what he is doing and his reason for doing it. One must contemplate that he is meditating to free himself of delusion and ignorance; he is seeking to know his own mind perfectly. This is synonymous with seeking the state of Buddhahood itself. The meditator must also think that he is seeking Buddhahood so that he will be able to lead all other sentient beings to that very state; and in so doing deliver them all from their sufferings. Therefore, before the actual practice, one must think of the virtues of meditation, one must humble himself before his goal, and one must think of the salvation of all beings. Meditation is a very serious matter and a

great responsibility. Contemplating these things, one readies himself for the practice.

This overflowing desire to aid all beings is called in the Scriptures the “Bodhicitta,” or “Enlightenment Mind.” The Bodhicitta stands as the very foundation of any Mahayana action; and so with the practice of meditation. To obtain the highest fruit, one must make proper beginnings. The importance of one’s mental attitude is stressed in many passages of the Buddhist Scriptures. I quote from one such passage which also bears on the practice of meditation:

But if ill-will or the desire to hurt others should stir your mind, purify it again with its opposite, which will act on it like a wishing jewel on muddied water. Friendliness and compassionateness are, you should know, their antidotes, for they are forever as opposed to hatred as light is to darkness. A man who, although he has learned to abstain from overt immoral acts, still persists in nursing ill-will, harms himself by throwing dirt over himself, like an elephant after his bath. For a holy man forms a tender estimate of the true condition of mortal beings, and how should he want to inflict further suffering on them when they are already suffering enough from disease, death, old age, and so on? With his malevolent mind a man may cause damage to others, or he may not; in any case his own malevolent mind will be forthwith burned up. Therefore you should strive to think of all that lives with friendliness and compassion, and not with ill-will and a desire to hurt. For whatever a man thinks about continually, to that his mind becomes inclined by the force of habit.¹

At the end of a practice, as at its beginning, it is the form of a Tibetan meditation to “raise the Bodhicitta” a final time. Thus, at the end of every meditation, the meditator must think of all sentient beings and, with a loving thought for them, dedicate the merit of his practice to the benefit of all such beings. In this way the Enlightenment-Thought always lives within the meditator.

1. *Buddhist Scriptures*. P. 109.

Sense Distractions and Beginning Practice

One other important concern to beginning meditators should be mentioned here: that is, the initial seeming “bombardment” of sense distractions to contemplation and meditation. It seems a very hard thing for a newcomer—and especially for Westerners—to sit quietly with eyes closed (or half closed), in an attempt to think of only one thing for even a matter of seconds! One discovers for the first time how very, very many thoughts and sense impressions one is constantly having. To attempt to focus on only one thought has the immediate effect of illuminating the tremendous barrage of other thoughts one’s mind is constantly experiencing. But the only way to “tame” this barrage of thoughts, and to begin to control the mind, is to not allow any distracting thoughts to disturb one’s practice, and this involves a great deal of perseverance. About distractions to meditation, the Scriptures say:

Force your wandering mind to become wholly occupied with one object. If that mental fever, the preoccupation with sensuous desires, should dare to attack you, do not give your consent, but shake it off, as if it were dust on your clothes. Although out of wise consideration, you may habitually eschew sense-desires, you can definitely rid yourself of them only through an antidote which acts on them like sunshine on darkness. There remains a latent tendency towards them, like a fire hidden under the ashes; this, like fire by water, must be put out by systematic meditation. . . . Sense-pleasures are impermanent, deceptive, trivial, ruinous, and largely in the powers of others; avoid them as if they were poisonous vipers! These sense-pleasures are not worth paying any attention to, for they are unstable, unreal, hollow, and uncertain, and the happiness they can give is merely imaginary.²

The Buddhist answer to these initial and major distractions to meditation is simple: One must simply not allow them to be distractions. This means that when these thoughts arise, one must train his mind not to be attracted to them. One Tibetan teaching for dealing with distractions is

2. *Buddhist Scriptures*. P. 108.

included here in “The Complete Stages of the Zhi-gNas Path.” Mastering distractions takes time for the beginner. One must simply persevere. The more one meditates, the easier meditation becomes.

In connection with the proper attitudes which must be engendered before one begins the actual practice of any meditation, I should like to quote here a short talk given by one of my Gurus, Serjhy Zopa Rinpoche.³ Its concern is with one’s mental attitude (or what he calls “impulse”) and taking the refuge, but one of the points it makes is that for any Buddhist action whatever, one’s resulting accomplishment is directly related to one’s initial attitudes.

The Refuge: I go to refuge in the Three Jewels until I receive the Buddhahood stage. May I receive Enlightenment sooner for all sentient beings, due to past merits [good karma] accumulated, present merits accumulating, and future merits to be accumulated.

When one takes this refuge, he may do so while entertaining any of three mental impulses. We may describe these impulses as lower, middle, and higher paths, and define them as follows:

The Lower Buddhist Person’s Path: “I must get the holy, happy rebirth of upper beings, without being reborn in those three lower worlds.”

The Middle Buddhist Person’s Path: “I must get Nirvana [everlasting happiness] and release from Samsara; for even if I get upper rebirth, this rebirth is still within Samsaric suffering and there is no guarantee that I will not be reborn in future lifetimes in those three lower worlds.”

The Higher Buddhist Person’s Path: “Just receiving Nirvana for only myself alone is not enough, for just as it is with me, it is exactly the same for all other beings—they seek happiness and do not desire suffering. Since all other beings are my mother, just as my mother of this present rebirth, I should repay them all in a higher way. All sentient beings must attain to the higher-complete happiness [i.e., Enlightenment], and be released from all suffering. Therefore I should repay them by leading them to this highest-complete happiness and by releasing them from all sufferings. I must undertake this

3. At the Kalacakra Initiation in Dharmasala, India, 1970.

responsibility myself. Only Buddha can help, for I don't have the ability of myself."

Therefore should one think "I am going to take the initiation of . . ." or "I will meditate upon . . . [the Buddha or Bodhisattva who is your yidam] in order that all sentient beings may be led into Enlightenment."

Tibetan meditations are always practiced with this last "impulse" in mind.

*The self is the lord of self;
 who else could be the lord?
 With self well subdued, a man
 finds a lord who is difficult to obtain.*

—Dhammapada, 160

There is but one way to the perfection of “self-cultivation,” and it involves the mastery of the two components of skillful meditational practice. These two components in Sanskrit are known as “samatha” and “vipasyana.” In Tibetan they are termed “zhi-gNas” (pronounced “sheenay”) and “lhag-thong,” respectively.

Samatha (or zhi-gNas) means the development of “one-pointedness” of mind. It is the “silencing of the active mind” and the getting rid of discriminations. Zhi-gNas is the stage in meditative practice in which quietude and freedom from the distractions of thought are attained. The Tibetan term literally means “to dwell in peace.”

Vipasyana is usually translated as “insight” or “awareness,” and its use in the meditational practice is to observe and examine the true nature of the mind. Vipasyana can, therefore, only be exercised once one has attained a firm foundation in samatha. But, the Tibetans continually advise, samatha and vipasyana must reinforce each other to be useful for the attainment of the highest goal, Enlightenment.

The Buddha, while giving a sermon to Ananda on the Bodhisattva's development through certain stages, said:

Absolute Enlightenment can be completely realised for the attainment of Supreme Bodhi. Throughout these different stages achieved by means of diamond insight into the ten profound illusions, the Tathagata's clear perception (vipasyana) is effectively used during the stilling of mind (samatha) in gradual practice and training.¹

Samatha and vipasyana should not be taken in the ordinary sense of "peace" and "insight." They are specific trainings of the mind, and there are specific practices to bring about their development. (See Chapter IX, "The Complete Stages of the Zhi-gNas Path," which describes the practice for developing zhi-gNas.)

The zhi-gNas meditations of Tibetan Buddhism, like those of other schools, are designed to build the mind's concentration to such a degree that it is able to rest one-pointedly and undistracted. The initial practice is to concentrate on an object, physical or mental (though the Tibetan practice almost always employs a mental object), and to attempt to hold it in the mind clearly and yet without strain for longer and longer periods each time.

The actual discipline for developing samatha differs in the two traditions. Speaking from the Theravada discipline, a Burmese monk² once explained: "There are four trances possible of attainment with samatha meditations. One may use any object whatever to develop samatha, but one must attain all four of the trances while using only one such object." He then went on to say, "Then one may concentrate on any object and advance each time through all the trances. For example, one may concentrate on the color white (using, say, a white piece of paper). After a while, white light is seen always in the meditation; then, as one advances through the stages of trance, the white light becomes very powerful and focused. One may do the same using the elements as objects. Water is a particularly good object. After one concentrates for a while on water, there is water everywhere, and, if one wishes, there is water for other people as well."

1. *The Surangama Sutra*. Trans. Charles Luk. Rider & Co., 1959. P. 173.

2. Ven. Ananda Maitri, at Wat Thai Buddhagaya, Bodhgaya, India, 1970.

Samatha is cultivated with the aim of creating a state of mind which is useful for practicing vipasyana. There are two types of vipasyana practice—one inner and one outer. The outer type of vipasyana is practiced with all physical actions. It is synonymous with “mindfulness” exercises. The type of vipasyana which is called “inner” is used to investigate the true nature of mind itself.

The Thai and Burmese schools have many outer vipasyana meditations, beginning with mindfulness exercises to increase the outside awareness of oneself in all activities. (One should see especially *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation* by Nyanaponika Thera and *The Foundations of Mindfulness*, a commentary on the *Satipatthana Sutta*.)

The Tibetans practice similar types of outer vipasyana. For example, they practice that when walking, one is to think, “As I walk, I am circumambulating the Buddha’s stupa; countless Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are standing to my right.” Or they might think, “In the same way as I walk along this path, so may all beings tread the Path of Dharma.” And so with each type of physical action.

Inner vipasyana practice deals with directing the one-pointed mind (of samatha) upon a principle of the Buddhist Doctrine, for example, Sunyata, or Dependent Origination, so that one is able to gain insights and truths in the practice itself.

VIII | HOW TO BEGIN THE PRACTICE

In order to meditate, one should first seek out a quiet place, as free as possible of all external distractions. If possible, you should arrange a place where you will meditate each day. It is preferable that you sit on a hard surface to meditate, but light cushions may be used if necessary.

You should sit in the “full-lotus” posture if possible. Otherwise, the “half-lotus” position is preferred. In either of these two positions, the right leg must rest over the left one. If you are unable to sit in either of these positions, you should sit in any position that will allow you to remain comfortable for some time. (For example, one may rest upon his knees, with ankles bent outward and feet under his buttocks.)

It is very important that the meditator’s back be straight. Your shoulders should be pushed slightly back, but not stiffened into a strain, and the arms should fall relaxed. Your head should be in line with the straight back, but slightly bowed. (A test for the proper position of the head can be made in the following way: Bend the head downward until, looking straight ahead, you are able to see a maximum point of the floor or ground

in front of you, at a distance of about one or one and one half yards.) Your hands should rest lightly in front of you, your left hand resting palm upward on your lap. The back of the right hand should rest on the upturned left palm. The fingers of both hands should be closed, and the thumbs should touch at the tips above the palms.

Seated thusly, you should either close or half close the eyes. Then you should breathe out naturally and then in. You should do this six times in, and six times out. Then in a relaxed mood, you should turn all thoughts wholly to the meditation itself.

Having presented all the foregoing material as background to the actual practices, I shall now present the Tibetan texts. I begin with the first, and very important, training for Tibetan practice, “The Complete Stages of the Zhi-gNas Path, describing the Path to the development of complete one-pointed concentration, necessary to advancement in the practice of all meditations.”

IX

THE COMPLETE STAGES
OF THE ZHI-GNAS PATH

as taught by the Third Tutor to

His Holiness, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama

“Zhi-gNas” may be analyzed thusly: “zhi-war” means peace, and “gNas” means to dwell. Therefore, “Zhi-gNas” means to dwell in peace. For any of the higher meditations, a peaceful mind is necessary. Therefore a strong Zhi-gNas is very important.

Concentration (i.e., Zhi-gNas) is very hard at first, because we have experienced many, many past lives of distraction. Distraction has almost become a quality of the mind itself. After doing Zhi-gNas for a short while, one realizes this “jumping” in the mind; one comes to see the mind as “a flag in the wind.”

In Zhi-gNas meditations, you are *visualizing*, not *imagining*! In visualizing, the mind is held strictly and is not so free as in imagining.

If the object of concentration (the visualization) is the whole object, and it happens that the whole object fades or diminishes to only part of the object (for example, to just the face of the deity), then the mind is scattering, and attention must be brought back to the whole object. What-

ever object is taken as the object of concentration—whether whole or part—this object must remain until Zhi-gNas has been attained.

If the object is obscure or cannot be seen, or moves, these troubles are caused by so many other thoughts.

Around our main mind there are many secondary minds (caitta) which have good and bad qualities. These qualities are making the distractions.

There are two main distractions to Zhi-gNas: 1) scattering, that is, when the mind goes away from the object of concentration; and 2) sinking, that is, when the mind is unclear and weak. Scattering disturbs the concentration, and sinking disturbs the clarity of the object.

I. There are two kinds of scattering: 1) 'hGro-pa (pronounced "gwo-pa"), which is the attraction of the mind to the five sense objects (and is caused by desire); and 2) Tho-wa, distraction caused by anything other than desire, such as the emotions, anger, impatience, etc. The remedies for scattering are the following:

1) If there is too much 'hGro-pa or Tho-wa, stop concentrating on an object and concentrate for a short time on *breathing*. If you concentrate well on breathing, six times in and out is enough to make your mind peaceful.

2) If some colors of the object are harder to concentrate upon than others, choose the easiest color, and keep it. Don't change colors. If none of the colors are coming out well, keep only one color, but stick to it.

3) Meditate upon the sorrows of samsaric existence. Think, "Life is short," "Beings suffer," etc. This gives some sorrow to the mind and brings some humbleness to it.

4) If after trying these remedies, you still can't concentrate, *get up; go for a walk*. Look into far distances (uninhabited areas and much open space are best). Come back afterwards when the mind is peaceful. When you begin the practice again, it is not necessary to begin from the very beginning of the meditation. If you force a tired mind, you only bring more distraction!

II. There are two forms of sinking: 1) "Ching-wa," in which concentration is possible but weak; there is not much energy, one's mind feels tired; and 2) rMugs-pa (pronounced "muk-pa"), in which the mind feels heavy (the body weak), the object is not clear. In short, the mind is "in a fog" ("rMugs-pa" literally means fog).

The remedies for sinking are the following:

1) For these two forms of distractions, breathing vipasyana won't help.

To help, one should meditate on *happy things* to bring the mind up: “the virtue of meditation,” “the goal of success,” etc.—whatever makes the mind feel happy.

2) Also, one may visualize much white light, like the moon or some bright object.

3) If these do not help, the Scriptures mention “to stop, and wash the head.”

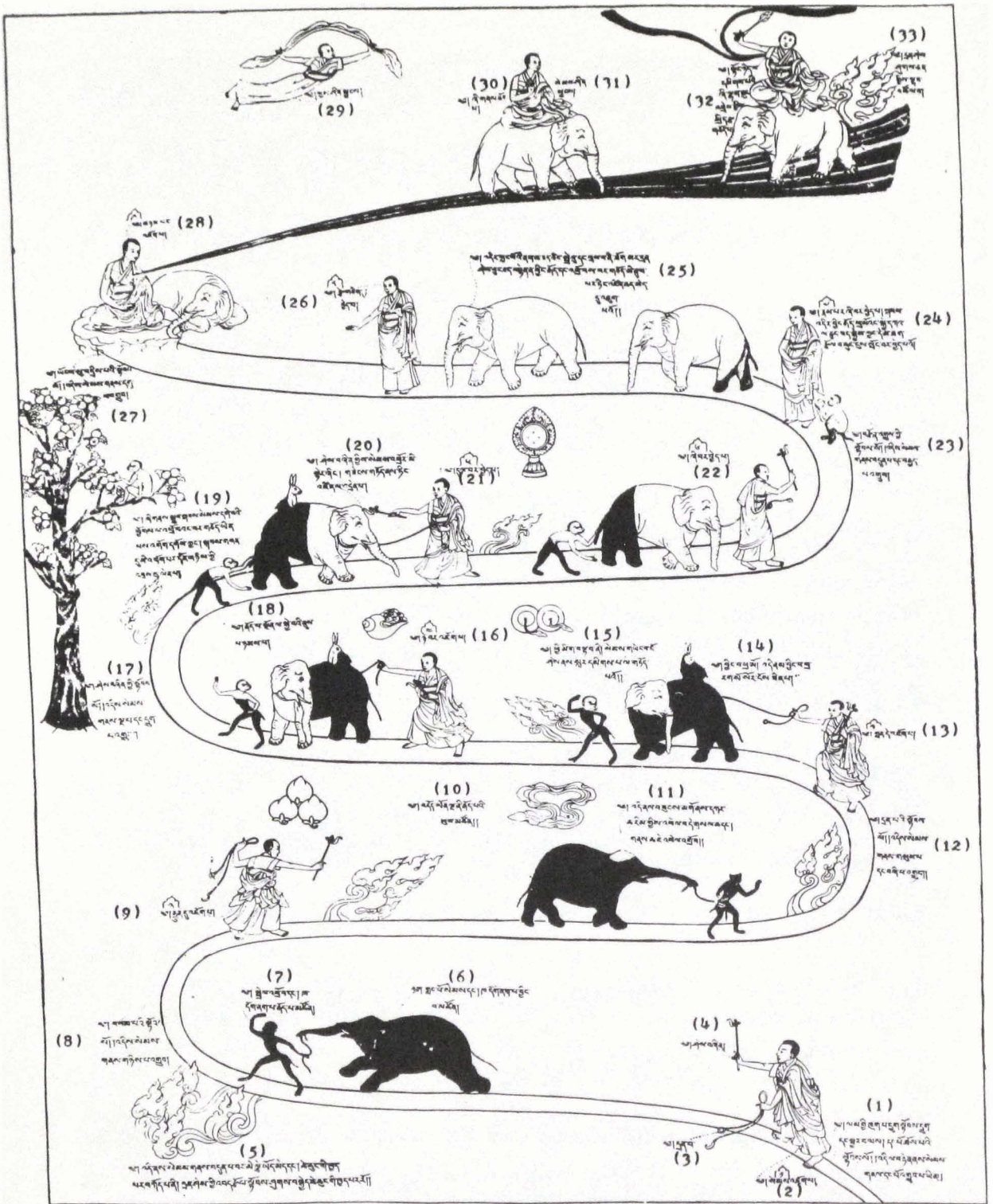
But the two distractions of sinking, “Ching-wa” and rMugs-pa, come much later in one’s practice, not at the very beginning. Meditation practice follows stages: first, the mind goes out (scattering); second, the concentration starts and the mind goes more inside; third, the meditator knows (through developed “watchfulness”) before the mind is about to go out, and so keeps it in.

Two qualities of the mind are very helpful in meditation practice. These are 1) Dran-pa (pronounced “tan-pa”), or remembrance. The meditator must remember the object of concentration often, as a mother constantly remembers her child. 2) The second aiding quality is “She-shing,” or *watchfulness*. One part of the mind watches the mind concentrate, as a mother watches her children.

Equipped with lessons, you are now ready to study the actual stages of development of the mind along the Zhi-gNas Path. So I shall now describe “The Complete Stages of the Zhi-gNas Path,” as explained with the aid of the Tibetan print of the elephant, monkey, and monk.

The Symbology of the Print (in Eight Parts)

I. The *elephant* is the example of the *mind*. It is used in the Tibetan diagram of the Zhi-gNas Path because: 1) If an elephant is wild, it is very dangerous to all other animals. Likewise, if the mind is not controlled, it can harm others. *All* suffering is caused by an untamed mind. 2) If an elephant is once tamed, he obeys his master better than any other animal; even if the master says to pick up a very large hot ball with his trunk, the elephant will do it. If the mind is once tamed, it can perform any action, no matter how difficult. 3) The footprint of the elephant is larger than any



The Complete Stages of the Zhi-gNas Path. Similar to the Japanese Zen, “Ten Ox-herding Drawings,” the Tibetan practice of calming the mind and developing concentration is illustrated by this drawing. The Tibetan symbols are the elephant, the monk and the monkey.

other animal's. If our mind is tamed and comes into the control of the Dharma, it also serves its master better than any other thing. If our mind is very peaceful and well tamed, there will no longer be any enemies of that person anywhere. If our mind is peaceful, we make all others around us peaceful. All the results of our mind—whether good or bad—are greater. The body and speech of a person are only servants of the mind.

II. The *monk* in the drawing is the meditator.

III. The *dark color of the elephant* signifies the presence of “Ching-wa” and rMugs-pa, because these two are “the darkness of the mind.” Therefore, the *dark elephant* symbolizes the *mind's sinking*.

IV. The *monkey* symbolizes Tho-wa, and its dark color 'hGro-pa, or the two forms of *scattering*. The monkey leads the elephant everywhere, always to different objects. (Just as scattering distracts the mind to sense objects.)

V. The *rope held by the monk* symbolizes Dran-pa, remembrance; and the *hook* symbolizes She-shing, or watchfulness.

VI. The *fire* is the energy for meditation.

VII. The conch, cymbals, mirror, perfume, and fruits represent the five sense objects. During meditation the mind is readily distracted by the objects of sense.

VIII. There are *nine elephants* in the drawing. These represent the *nine stages of the mind's development* along the Zhi-gNas Path.

(The object of the meditation is not mentioned here, because it may vary. Any object of concentration is sufficient to develop Zhi-gNas, though Tibetan practice, from the beginning, uses a visualization of a deity, i.e., a holy object.)

The Nine Stages of the Path

I. 1st Stage ('hJug-pa; pronounced “juk-pa”), “to put, or fix.” In the first stage our mind is completely under the control of 'hGro-pa and Tho-wa, and at the will of the five sense objects. (The rope and the hook carried by the monk cannot help at this point.) When the object is not clear, disturbances are plentiful. The “elephant” is not even looking toward the rope and hook. At this first stage, the flame of the fire must be very strong, because much energy is needed.

II. 2nd Stage (rGyun-du-'hJug-pa), “to put, continuously.” Hope of

success begins at this stage. (The monk holds up his hands.) The rope and hook are needed to bind and tie the elephant. One must use remembrance and watchfulness to bring close the object of meditation. The hook makes it possible to drive the elephant in the right direction.

The *white spot* on the heads of the elephant and of the 'hGro-pa monkey symbolize that the *mind begins to become a bit more calm*. 'HGro-pa and Tho-wa become a bit less of a problem.

III. 3rd Stage (Lan-te-'hJug-pa), "to go and come back; to put, go, and return." Using remembrance (dran-pa)—the rope is on the elephant's neck and the *elephant looks toward the monk*.

The *rabbit* makes his appearance at this stage. Within "Ching-wa," there are two divisions: Ching-wa-Rags-pa (which is the grosser form of sinking, and is easy to recognize as distraction) and Ching-wa-Ta-mo, which is the fine, camouflaged form of the distraction. The rabbit represents Ching-wa-Ta-mo, this subtle form of sinking.

The rabbit uses good camouflages. It can be *mistaken for progress*; but this is a mistake. Ching-wa-Ta-mo does not disturb concentration, and so it *relaxes the meditator*, and is pleasurable. Still, it is a disturbance, because *later* it will make our mind weak; it kills the desire to make much effort or expend much energy. Like a punctured balloon, it makes the mind weaker and weaker, slowly. At this stage, this fine, subtle form of "Ching-wa" is discovered.

IV. 4th Stage (Nye-par-'hJug-pa), "to put closely." At this stage, the dark and white colors are almost half and half. 'HGro-pa and Tho-wa are much less. The rope on the elephant's neck is *loose*, because the mind is quite obedient at this stage. Concentration on the object is possible for a maximum of fifteen minutes, without any distraction.

V. 5th Stage ('hDul-par-Jed-pa), "to tame." 'HGro-pa and Tho-wa are almost completely gone at this stage. For this reason, the *monkey is now behind the elephant*; now the mind is not under the leadership of scattering distractions. The rope (i.e., Dran-pa) is not very necessary now. But at this stage, "Ching-wa" appears very strong. At this time the hook (i.e., watchfulness) is very important. A meditator, after long fighting with 'HGro-pa and Tho-wa, now tends to *relax*. Therefore, "Ching-wa," which is "easing-weakness," grows.

At this stage is shown *another monkey eating from a tree*. But this monkey is outside of the Zhi-gNas practice. He is not on the path. This means that while one is developing Zhi-gNas, *no other thoughts*, even

those of Dharma or meditations on Samsara, etc., must be allowed to interfere with the concentration!

At this fifth stage, fixed concentration for more than half an hour is possible. The object is very clear, very “close” to the mind; and the mind is peaceful, with no distractions.

From this stage on, the meditator can see the object of concentration much clearer than with his two eyes!

VI. 6th Stage (zhi-par-Jed-pa), “to make peace.” There is no more ’hGro-pa or Tho-wa, and almost no “Ching-wa.” No hook and rope are needed. The monk is not even looking at the elephant. Concentration without any disturbance is possible for at least one hour.

VII. 7th Stage (Nam-par-zhi-par-Jed-pa), “to make completely peaceful.” After long practice, this stage is reached. The monk is behind the elephant. He just allows his mind to go. It will concentrate on its own. No energy is needed; concentration comes immediately. (But still, the monk is *looking!* There is still subtle “Ching-wa” and Tho-wa, but (because they totally lack dark color) there is no disturbance at all. Concentration is possible for about four hours.

VIII. 8th Stage (Tse-chig-tu-jed-pa), “to make one-pointed.” At this stage there is automatic concentration *until* the meditator wishes to stop it. And as the concentration progresses, so does the *clarity* of the object concentrated upon. (At this stage one’s other senses do not operate as well, or at all.) The monk doesn’t even need to look at the elephant; the elephant just comes and obeys. Concentration for one or two days without a break is possible.

IX. 9th Stage (Nyag-par-Jog-pa), “to put equally.” The monk meditates, and the elephant just sleeps. At this stage there is no *limit* to the length of fixed concentration. According to the meditator’s feelings, his mind and the object become one. (Actually, they are different from one another, but this “oneness” is a definite sign of progress.)

The meditator is totally non-dependent upon the senses. For example, he needs no food. The Scriptures mention that at this stage the meditator uses only “the food of samatha.” At this stage the meditator feels able to count all the molecules of a mountain, so sharp is his concentration.

Many people mistake this stage as the goal of Zhi-gNas, itself. But all these nine stages are only the *path to Zhi-gNas*; they are not really Zhi-gNas. The real Zhi-gNas is reached at the tenth stage, when the monk is sitting astride the elephant.

Concluding Remarks

After the 9th Stage of Zhi-gNas is attained, many new, extraordinary experiences come, which have never been experienced before. When these experiences come, this is the sign that Zhi-gNas has been attained; this is the Zhi-gNas goal.

Not only when in meditation, but *in all actions*, the one possessed of accomplished Zhi-gNas is at this stage of full concentration. His body feels light as the wood-wool flower (like the mimosa blossom). After this goal, the meditator gains all other supernatural powers (such as reading minds, disappearing, and transferring his consciousness into other beings).

Like someone who has “sharpened the axe to cut all things,” he is capable of doing *any other meditative practice*.

After sharpening an axe, a person must use it. After taming the mind in Zhi-gNas, one must use it for higher practice. We must use it for the attainment of Enlightenment! We must ourselves become Buddha!

The miracle powers are not important things. The important thing is developing the mind! One has to *free one’s mind* from the “trap of delusion.”

At this level of attainment any concentration is possible, *but* when the meditator attempts to judge or investigate, for example, thought, he does not get this pleasurable feeling. Then again, one has to *train for investigation*. After this training is complete, during and after investigating, the meditator gets this pleasure. This type of pleasure is much more than before (i.e., than the pleasures of Zhi-gNas alone).

This goal, with its higher pleasure feelings, is called “lhag-thong,” to see more, *higher seeing*. It is called “adi-Zhi-gNas.”

These are the two indispensable things for higher practice, for abandoning delusion. If one wants to cut a tree, he must have both a strong arm (Zhi-gNas) and a good axe (lhag-thong). After training in these two, one must use *the mind* for higher and higher practice.



PART THREE

The Tibetan Meditations

X | INTRODUCTION

*By not committing any sin,
By accomplishing every virtue,
To subdue one's own mind absolutely—
That is the teaching of the Buddha.*

*By oneself, indeed, is evil done; by oneself is one
injured. By oneself is evil left undone; by oneself is one
purified. Purity and impurity belong to oneself. No
one purifies another.*

—Dhammapada, 165

Kriya Tantra meditations are *purification meditations*. In the practice of them, emphasis is placed on cleansing the negativities of the Three Doors, i.e., body, speech, and mind, so that one's whole being becomes closer to the Buddha's being.

The Tibetan canon of tantra, called the *Tangyur*, and forming a third of the text of the famous voluminous canon, the *Kangyur*, lists four classes of tantra:

- 1) Kriya Tantra (Tibetan, *Bya-wa'i rGyud*; pronounced "ja-we-gyud")¹
- 2) Charya Tantra (Tibetan, *Spyod-gyud*)
- 3) Yoga Tantra (Tibetan, *rNal-'hbyor rGyud*; pronounced "nal-jor-gyud")
- 4) Anuttara Tantra (Tibetan, *rNal-'hbyor bla-na-med kyi rGyud*; pronounced "nal-jor la-na-med kyi gyud").

1. A tantric treatise is called "gyud," which literally means to weave.

In Kriya and Charya Tantra, most emphasis is laid on purification, both external and internal, and on developing the Bodhicitta (or Enlightenment Mind, full of compassion for all beings without exception).

In Yoga Tantra, emphasis shifts to solely internal activities. However, this yoga, in the Tibetan tradition, still refers to mind exercises; it is mind yoga as well as body yoga.

Finally there comes Anuttara-Yoga Tantra, the supreme, the very highest tantric practice of Tibetan Buddhism. As His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso has defined this tantra, “This [tantra] stresses the supreme importance of inner activity, regardless of the purification of external activities, i.e., it involves a higher type of meditation.”²

These tantras have been listed in a certain order; although Anuttara Tantra is the highest practice, this does not imply that all the classes of practice must be done consecutively. One’s Guru may begin the meditator at any level, depending on the latter’s ability and natural inclination.

However, for one beginning to practice Tibetan meditations in the West, no better practices could be done than to complete those purification meditations of the Kriya Tantra. To begin on the Path of Buddhist Dharma, these meditations furnish a sound foundation.

In the following pages, nine meditations (and one text on the rules of Vajrayana practice) are presented. The first five meditations are taken from the practices of the Kriya Tantra. The next five texts are preliminary practices taken from the Anuttara-Yoga Tantra.

There are four main Tibetan sects: Nyingmapa, Kargyudpa, Gelugpa, and Sakyapa. The collection of texts presented here is made up of texts from each of these sects. There are three Gelugpa texts, three of the Kargyudpa, one Sakyapa, and two of the Nyingmapa. Of these ten texts, five have appeared before in printed form. The “Prayer to the Lama for Initiation” has been printed (in English) in India, and distributed to disciples of the Kargyudpa School (especially in *A Garland of Morning Prayers*, a booklet published by a Kargyudpa nunnery in Tilokpur, India). The short text of “Padma’s Initiation by a Dakini” has appeared in Evans-Wentz’s *The Book of the Great Liberation*. John Blofeld in *The Way of Power* and in *The Tantric Mysticism of Tibet* has presented different versions of both the White Tara and the Dorje Sempa meditations. “The Transference of the Body, Speech, and Mind of Padma Sambhava” has

2. *Short Essays on Buddhist Thought and Practice*. P. 4.

appeared in Baba Ram Das's *Be Here Now!* with the permission of its translator and teacher, Tharthang Tulku.

To my knowledge, all the other texts presented here have not appeared in English before, and appear here for the first time. The fact that they are gathered here is due to the graciousness of the high lamas who gave them as part of the Guru-disciple relationship. I received personal initiations into each of the Gelugpa meditations presented here through the blessings of both my own Guru, Geshe Yeshe, and one of the teachers of His Holiness the Dalai Lama; and other texts were given me by very close "Dharma-friends" with the permission of their Gurus.

The Kriya Tantra practices may be begun in the West without the aid of a Guru though it is always better to have such a teacher as one's guide. However, the practices of the Anuttara Tantra *should not* be attempted without a competent Guru, as they require additional instructions for their complete practice. I have included them only as examples of the higher Tibetan practices.

It has long been the desire of many Tibetan lamas, now in India and Nepal, to have such a collection of meditation practices presented to Western readers. It is hoped that the present work is a step toward that goal, as well as toward the goal which seeks benefit and happiness to all beings.



Chenresig (Sanskrit, Avalokiteshvara). In this form, having one face and four arms, he personifies the Buddha's Great Compassion. All deities of refuge are manifest in his changes. His mantra is OM MANI PADME HUM.

The Meditation of Chenresig

Both meditations of Chenresig presented here are Nyingmapa texts. They were translated by Khalu Rinpoche while in Darjeeling, West Bengal.

There has been some discussion of Chenresig in Part I of this work. It might here be said that Avalokitesvara was sent from the heaven of Amitabha (Tibetan, Opagme) Buddha, the Buddha of Boundless Light. So it is natural that a Chenresig meditation in particular involves the visualization and absorption of much light. (Kriya Tantra meditations in general, because of their emphasis on purification, involve much light.)

HEREIN IS CONTAINED THAT WHICH
BENEFITS EVERYONE
THROUGHOUT THE HEAVENS

I take refuge in the Great Awakening
And its unfolding

Within these most exalted forms¹
Until I realize complete enlightenment.

May performance of all virtues
Bring auspicious fate.
Only for benefit of all
May the truth be finally perceived.

At all times from the crown of head
Of all sentient beings²
Throughout the heavens
Blossoms a white lotus
Supporting a lunar disc,
Above which appears
The White Seed Syllable HRI,³
The embodiment of the highest,
The glorious divinity Chenresig,
The one of all-perceiving compassion
From whose body shines the pure and clear
Five-colored rainbowed rays.⁴
His all seeing eyes radiate compassion
From a beautiful and smiling face.

Of his four arms, the first pair
Are palm to palm in prayer,
The lower two hold crystal rosary
On the right, and white lotus left.
He is adorned with precious raiment,
Jewels and fur of the wild beast,
About his shoulders,

1. The forms which manifest themselves during meditation practice, the images of the “meditation mind.”
2. The description of the central yidam begins here.
3. The Seed Syllable is the syllable which carries and expresses the very essence of any given mantra.
4. These symbolize the attainment of the Five Wisdoms possessed by every Buddha: 1) the all-pervading wisdom, 2) the mirrorlike wisdom, 3) the wisdom of equality, 4) the discriminating wisdom, and 5) the all-performing wisdom.

Glorified by the Buddha of Boundless Light⁵
Shining forth from the crown of his head.

He sits with crossed legs
In the position of Immutability.⁶
He rests his back upon
The Stainless Moon of Void.⁷
All Deities of Refuge
Are manifest in his changes.

O Noble One of pure white form
Crowned with Complete Awareness,
Whose compassionate eyes perceive all Being,
Let all Reverence be paid to Chenresig!

Now from my prayer
Arises the single-minded
Mind of Meditation.

All form is radiance and wisdom
Cleansing the illusion-mind from all impurities.
Now this very world itself
Is known to be the Pure Land of Perfect Bliss.
All beings born of essence—void—
Have body, speech, and mind
By Chenresig's Blessing
These three are seen to be
The illumination of the void.
Realizing the essential emptiness of all existence,
Ignorance and wisdom, as well as all appearances,
Are known as illusion
And harmony prevails.

OM MANI PADME HUM

5. That is, the Buddha Amitabha.

6. That is, in padmasana, the full-lotus mudra, or the position of Immutability.

7. The moon in Buddhist iconography is symbolic of Sunyata, the Truth of the Void Nature of all things.

FIRST MEDITATION

After repeating “OM MANI PADME HUM” at least 108 times, one should enter into meditation, thinking of one’s body-mind as Chenresig’s.⁸ Visualize a white “HRI” in the heart center.

Light shining from his seed syllable suffuses the divine body, and emanating from the pores of the skin, illuminates the entire universe and all six realms of existence, transforming all ignorance and all forms into pure, radiant light, which is then drawn back into the divine body.

The intensity of the gathering light dissolves all form and thought until only “HRI” remains.

Allow this syllable to be the only thing existing. Let it remain as long as natural. Then it also dissolves into itself until it shrinks to an infinitesimally small point that can no longer be perceived. What remains now?

It is the pure essence-mind which is the true nature, which manifests in so many ways. One should keep this realization as something that has not now begun—being unborn and ever present, it is endless ease, not different, not a state of being, beyond conception, beyond perception, the ONE TRUE STATE.

Suddenly, all worlds of form reappear without disrupting the meditator’s clear vision of the ONE MIND.

Now all creatures’ illusion forms are seen as bodies of divinity. All sounds are the six-syllable mantra.⁹ All meditation appears within the vast ocean of wisdom.

By Chenresig’s Blessing,
May I quickly be transformed
To this joyous state of virtue.
May all beings without exception
Realize this wondrous state.¹⁰

8. The meditator is here instructed to think of himself as the yidam. In certain stages of anuttara-yoga tantra, the meditator must think thusly at all times.

9. That is, OM MA NI PAD ME HUM.

10. The final “raising of the Bodhicitta” and the “turning over of merit” for the practice are characteristic features of all Mahayana practices.

SECOND MEDITATION

The protecting deity Chenresig on the crown of the head melts into light and flows like vapor, dissolving self and others into the heart center, where in the middle of a six-petaled lotus stands a white “HRI” surrounded by an inward-facing circle of OM MA NI PAD ME HUM revolving to the right.

From this shines a light that fills the body and radiates out from the pores of the skin, reaching to all the Buddha Realms, where all the Buddhas receive this offering and return the Blessing.

The Meditation of White Tara¹¹

The translation of this White Tara meditation is based upon a Gelugpa text, but it is particularly powerful because of certain additional visualizations and insights incorporated into it by Zopa Tulku, a Gelugpa Rinpoche who lives in Nepal.

There are twenty-one forms, or bodies, of Tara (Tibetan, Dölma). According to the Kargyudpa tradition, Dölma’s origin is that she was symbolically born of the tear that fell from Chenresig’s eye as he looked upon the agonies of the world. She is called alternatively the “Goddess Dölma, she that saves all from transmigratory existence,” and “Dölma, mild by day and wrathful by night.” Tara is, in the iconography of Tibetan Buddhism, the essence of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. As the female principle, she is the embodiment of the highest wisdom (prajna). In this meditation, as the form White Tara, she is the Goddess of Long Life as well as wisdom, and wears upon her garland crown, Amitayus, the Buddha of Infinite Life.

On the throne just above one’s head, visualize White Tara, having two hands and seven eyes, one face, and sitting upon the moon and lotus. Her right hand rests on her right knee, with the position of fingers (mudra) called “chogjin-gyi chag-gya.” Her left hand is held against her head and

11. As explained by Zopa Tulku, a Rinpoche of the Gelugpa Sect.



White Tara (Tibetan pronunciation Dölma Karmo). White Tara has seven eyes on her face, palms, and feet. Her mudra is that of “Granting Boons,” in this case, the realizations sought for in meditation.

holds a blue flower called “od dPal sNgonpo.” (The position of her body is the same as in her picture, i.e., yantra.)

All her body is of a spiritual nature and is very transparent, as dew. It has no resistance and is all in the nature of the white light, and her omniscient mind. Her face is very peaceful and smiling and can give perfect peace to my mind and to all others’ minds just by looking at it. Having these three syllables—“OM, AH, HUM”—on her forehead, throat, and heart, Tara should be imagined as the total essence of all the Gurus, Buddhas, and Bodhisattvas. Transformed from her body, countless goddesses of initiation are emanated, until the whole sky is filled with this goddess, carrying the long-life bowl, in which there is the blessed water of long life and transcendental wisdom.

OFFERING

One’s body, speech, mind, belongings, and merits of the three times should be transformed into five different offerings, filling space: very sweetly scented flowers, most harmonious sounds, fragrant incense, countless bowls filled with amrita, and soft and beautiful cloths. Make these unlimited offerings to the countless dakinis.¹²

Say the following prayer, paying close attention to its meaning. First one should visualize the universe, and it should be purified as a Buddha realm, as in the prayer:

The ground is purified with scented water and is strewn with flowers.

It is adorned with Sumeru, King of Mountains, the four quarters of the Universe, the sun and the moon.

Thinking of it as the blessed Buddha Field, I offer it . . .

By virtue of this, may all beings here and now enjoy the happiness of that Pure Land.

CONFESSION

These thoughts are the remedies for all one’s negativities: “I have never received Buddhahood from the very beginning of my originless

12. Dakinis are the goddesses of initiation. They are representative of the Buddha in female guise. The female, in tantric practice, is symbolic for Buddha’s wisdom.

samsaric life [until now], even though countless other sentient beings have attained Enlightenment. I have never attained to the Supreme Bodhisattva's Path, and never attained to Arhatship. I have never attained even to a full renunciation of the needs of this life, nor to full refuge. I have been possessed by the ego. I have been undergoing those Three Total Sufferings¹³ for countless lives, due to my mind's being possessed by delusion and mental defilements. I have been completely ignorant of the Buddha's teachings. Right at this very moment, now, I must be out of all these. Therefore, I must go for refuge to you [Tara] and the goddesses who are the Fully Enlightened Ones. [One must imagine that the object-Buddhas accept immediately.]

“I have been creating countless negative actions of speech, body, and mind, which will cause me to remain in those three lower worlds¹⁴ almost forever, not receiving Buddhahood even after all other beings have attained it. Just one negative action done for only one second results in limitless suffering. This includes misbelieving in reality or the laws of karma and its fruits, or disbelieving the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, or creating any bad action with holy objects—such as getting angry with one's Guru or with any holy, or realized, being. Bad actions also include disobeying the Guru's orders or advice, or degenerating the vows of the Bodhisattva's and Tantric faith.

“I create not just one negative action in a day, but many times in a day, countless negative actions in a week and a month, countless such actions in a year, much more in a lifetime, as well as in all my previous lives. I have created such a limitless number of negativities that, if they had form, they would not fit in the endless sky; and a number of accumulating negativities which is beyond the Buddha's thought, much more so beyond the thought of worldly beings. I am the worst sinner. It seems I would remain in hell forever, even after all beings attain Buddhahood. I have created for myself such a great loss, if I were to die right at this moment it would be too horrible. [One must truly feel very sorrowful as one thinks of having created all these actions of bad karma. One should feel as though poison had entered one's stomach.]

“Please, I pray to the Three Jewels, Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, look upon me with your limitless compassion, and consider upon me.

13. That is, 1) the suffering of sufferings, 2) changeable suffering, and 3) the suffering of clinging attachment.

14. That is, the worlds of men, animals and hungry ghosts, and denizens of hell.

Please forgive me for having created these countless negativities, and help me to completely purify myself. Please eradicate, at this very moment, all the negativities of body, speech, and mind, which have been accumulated from countless lives. [One must imagine and believe that all the goddesses accept with gladness to help purify oneself, and that all the negativities and the Ego are completely purified.]

“From today on, I will never create such karma, it is completely decided.”

MANTRA

Now recite the mantra “OM TARE TUTTARE TURE YE SWAHA” with the following visualization.¹⁵

1) Much white, blessed water now streams from the central Tara and all her surrounding Dakinis (who are the essence of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas) and is absorbed into me. The blessed water cleanses away the entirety of one’s negativities, mental defilements, and delusion, which now appear as black, filthy waters. These dissolving negativities are also seen in different bodily forms: as awful and frightening animals such as snakes, frogs, scorpions, and crabs. All space is filled with tremendous heaps of these negativities. After imagining this for some time, one should imagine the foreground directly in front of oneself to suddenly open. Nine stories below the surface, the “owners of death” teem. They are called “shinje.” Each has the head of a lion, and waits with open jaws. Countless numbers of the heaps of negativities, like great mountains, go down into their mouths. Now, the shinje are very satisfied and gay. They run down into the earth for many thousands of miles, and once again, the foreground is closed.

Imagine now that your body becomes very light and is receiving the limitless happiness of Tara. All one’s negativities have been completely removed.

2) White nectar streams over me, cleansing all my delusion and illusion. It fills me up and submerges me in its sea. Suddenly, it disappears, and I receive Tara’s limitless happiness. Every negativity of body, speech, and mind is completely purified.

15. Five different visualizations are given here. These correspond to different stages of tantric practice, and one should not attempt to visualize them all. One should first practice only with the first visualization given, and one should practice it for some time before attempting to go on to the others.

3) A tremendous white light, which is the essence of Tara's wisdom, love, and power, radiates into me. It dissolves the thought of "self," along with every delusion and illusion that was accumulated in countless past lives. Visualize that nowhere can an "I" be pointed to or shown. Now receive the boundless qualities of Tara's wisdom, love, and power.

4) Again, the nectar which is Tara's body and mind streams from all the goddesses, and is absorbed into the open center nadi,¹⁶ and extends straight to the navel. That nectar completely purifies away superstition, obstacles of the nadis and breath, and completely replenishes the degenerated power of the breath and nadis.

5) Again, from all the surrounding dakinis and the center Tara stream red and yellow rays (which are the essence of Tara's wisdom), and radiate into me. By this, I receive Her wisdom, which fully sees all present, past, and future things, and the reality of whole existence.

Now all the surrounding dakinis of initiation are absorbed into me, gradually, and I receive their limitless wisdom, love, and power. After having absorbed all these goddesses, one should offer this prayer to the center Tara: "Please come to absorb me and grant me the realization of your special body and mind. Please release me from all illusive visions and conceptions at this very moment."

Tara should be imagined as being extremely pleased and as "accepting to give" all the realizations asked. She comes to sit on one's head, then comes to the heart and is absorbed. Now one really completely becomes White Tara, and all impure visions and the illusive mind are dispelled; the past illusionary vision that the whole unity of my body is me (i.e., is an "I") was really illusive (void); also the ordinary vision of "body" was unreal, as body is completely nonexistent (devoid).¹⁷

The Tara which you become should be imagined as very transparent and all in the nature of light (as dew which cannot be held or grasped). This very calm, transparent body of Tara's suddenly dispells the darkness of the universe. Countless rays of this light radiate to all sentient beings and their lands, purifying them all. Now every impure being and all impure lands are completely purified. All the (formerly) impure beings be-

16. This particular visualization accompanies strict yogic practice and requires further instruction from a competent Guru.

17. Herein are contained pith instructions on the principle Sunyata, or the Void Nature of all things.

come White Tara; all the impure lands become the very Pure Realm of White Tara. Now, all these White Taras are absorbed into me, and I receive all the limitless knowledge of the supreme love, power, and understanding of White Tara.

DEDICATION

May I bring all sentient beings into the realm of White Tara, by attaining to myself White Tara, in consequence of past, present, and future merits.

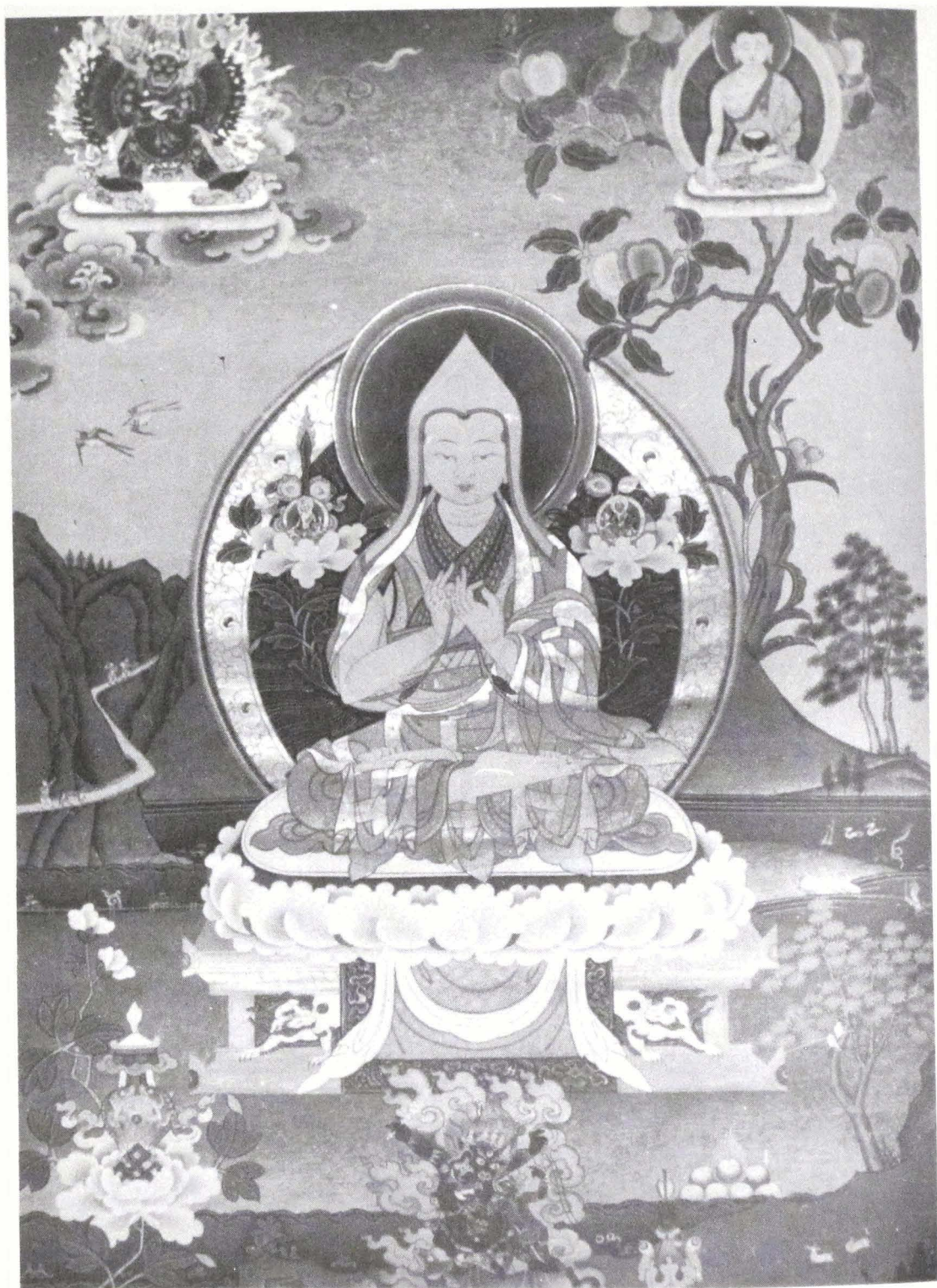
The Meditation of Lobsang Dorje Chang

This version of the Dorje Chang meditation is based upon the Gelugpa texts and was given in this form by my Guru, Geshe Thubten Yeshe.

T'song Khapa, "the One born in the Onion Country" (around the Amdo Province of Tibet), whose monastic name is Losang Tagpa, founded the Gelugpa Sect. As founder, he is the seed, or line Guru, of the sect. For the Gelugpas, T'song Khapa is not only an emanation of Lord Chenresig, but also incarnates Manjusri, the Buddha's wisdom, and the Adi-Buddha, Dorje Chang. Therefore in this meditation he is referred to as Lobsang Dorje Chang, to identify him directly with the Adi-Buddha Body, the Dharmakaya.

REFUGE

Imagine all the countless Buddhas and Bodhisattvas surround you in your place of meditation. Imagine that from these Buddhas and Bodhisattvas lights emanate; white light emanates from them and enters at the point of your forehead (OM), signifying body, purifying the defilements of body. From the countless Buddhas, red light emanates and enters at the point of your throat (AH), signifying speech, purifying the defilements



Lobsang Dorje Chang (T'song Khapa). Familiarly known as Je Rinpoche, T'song Khapa founded the Gelugpa Sect of Tibetan Buddhism. His mudra represents "Tranquility Joined to Wisdom," or the Perfect Method Joined to the Perfect Wisdom of Buddha.

of speech. Blue light emanates from all the Buddhas and enters the point of your heart center (HUM), signifying mind, purifying the defilements of mind. From all the Buddhas emanate lights, white, red, and blue, which enter your three doors, blessing them.

Now, cleansed of all impurities, you begin to take the Refuge: "I take refuge in Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, so that I and all my mother sentient beings may attain sooner to Complete Perfect Enlightenment. I take this refuge from now until the time of my final Enlightenment."

MEDITATION

After taking the refuge, imagine that all the lights of the countless Buddhas and Bodhisattvas merge into one light; that is the emanation of Manjusri Bodhisattva, LOBSANG DORJE CHANG.

Visualize Lobsang Dorje Chang. His body is white tinged with red. The white symbolizes his attainment of transcendental happiness (attained through the practice of the third initiation yoga).¹⁸ His red complexion signifies his attainment of the spiritual body, which is not material and which is not formed of atoms. His mind and body are one, the Buddha Body. His face is peaceful and slightly smiling. His eyes are half closed, very smooth and long, and showing great compassion. He wears the yellow robes (chos-go) and hat (pensha) of a lama giving teaching. His mudra is that of the giving of sermons:¹⁹ the thumb and first finger of each hand form a circle, the right hand held against the heart center, and the left hand facing the right hand. The facing of each hand to each signifies method and wisdom together: the inspiration of wisdom joined to the method to perfect Enlightenment.

Through the circle formed by each of his hands comes the stem of a lotus flower,²⁰ which blossoms beside each of his shoulders. Each lotus is white tinged with red. Each is fully opened, symbolizing the opened, the Enlightened Mind. The left lotus holds a paramita book (Tibetan, sher-

18. The third initiation yoga of anuttara-yoga tantric practice, called the "Initiation of Wisdom." Its successful practice results in the attainment of the Dharmakaya, or "Body of Truth."

19. This mudra is often depicted on sculptures and paintings of Buddha. Only one Fully Enlightened can perform this mudra, as it indicates that one is able to communicate teachings while in the highest states of samadhi.

20. The lotus is symbolic in Buddhist iconography of the mind. Hence, the fully opened lotus represents the Enlightened Mind itself.

phyin kyi-mdo),²¹ symbolizing wisdom (its subject being realization of the pure nature of mind). On the right lotus stands a sword,²² symbolizing the perfect method, which is the cutting of the ego.

Dorje Chang sits in the full-lotus position (dorje kirtum), all elements straight, all mind straight. His body is transparent, like clear light, clean and radiating like the sun. With this light, he makes all the universe clean. Rays from his body spread into all the universes of sentient beings. At the same time his emanations spread to all these universes. May all reverence be paid to Lobsang Dorje Chang!

Now, that you may receive this most exalted form, offer the following prayer:

Kya-dak Dorje Chang chen-la sol-wa deb
Gyud dak-zin thi-wa chos-pa dang
Jam-nying-jai jang-sem jong-wa dang
Lam zung-jug phyag-rgya chen-po yi
Chos myur-du tho-par chin-gyi lob.²³

which means: “Upon my knees, I am asking Lobsang Dorje Chang to cease the greed of my mental ego, to train in me the Bodhisattva’s mind caused by the great compassion and love, and to bless me to receive sooner the highest realization of the Phyag-rgya-Chenpo (Mahamudra), due to following inseparably to the perfect Method and Wisdom.”

Then the one light, as Lobsang Dorje Chang, enters from the point at the top of your head²⁴ and comes to rest at your heart center. Now still, your body light and filled with b’dud-rtsi²⁵ (pronounced “dut-se”) you begin to repeat the mantra:

OM AH GURU BENZAR DHARA
SAMATHI KIRTI SIDDHI HUM

21. The “Prajna-Paramita Sutra,” or the text of the “Perfection of Wisdom.”

22. The sword is the symbol of Manjusri, the Buddha’s wisdom. It cuts ignorance, greed, lust, and ego.

23. Tibetan lamas often say that it is better to recite such prayers in Tibetan, if possible, and if one understands the prayer’s meaning. Therefore, I have given it both in Tibetan and in translation.

24. Tibetan, sa-u-ma, the central point, approximately four inches back from the forehead, and on the top of the head. This point is very important for yogi practices.

25. Tibetan for “holy, or sacred, water”; the blessed substance, amrita. In these practices, light and dut-se are spiritual substances which cleanse away impurities.

The Yoga Method of Dorje Sempa

The meditation in this form was given by Geshe Thubten Yeshe in Nepal.

When Sakyamuni Buddha attained Enlightenment, he showed the Dorje Sempa form to his Vajrayana disciples. He showed this extraordinary form because to have emanated an ordinary vision would have only generated ordinary mind. He showed the extraordinary Dorje Sempa form, the Buddha's Body of Bliss, Sambhogakaya, in order to generate in his disciples the extraordinary mind. Of kriya tantra meditations presented here, this Gelugpa meditation of Dorje Sempa is the most powerful; it is practiced especially to cure one of all negativities so that he may make progress on the Path, for the benefit of all sentient beings.

(This meditation is to be practiced before sleeping. An attempt should be made to recite the mantra 108 times, but it must be recited at least 21 times.)²⁶

Before meditating, one should think, "In many previous lifetimes I have created very much bad karma. I must finish it *now* (in this very lifetime)! Bad karma is just like fire; if I don't finish it, it will burn me. Bad karma is just like poison; from the root of poison, poison grows. I must take the antidote or die."

Think and experience true sorrow because of all the bad karma you've created in countless lifetimes, and in this one.²⁷

Generate the thought "This I will never do again." Now begin the meditation.

Visualize Dorje Sempa sitting upon a moon bed atop a lotus about six to eight inches above your head. His body is the Buddha's body. It is omniscient Mind. Dorje Sempa sits, adorned with many beautiful jewels on his crown, around his neck, and hanging from his ears. Actually, all the jewels are of the nature of the Buddha's mind. Every part of his body is

26. It is the usual practice to use a mala, or Tibetan rosary, to count off the number of times a mantra is to be repeated. This way, counting does not interfere with the concentration of the actual meditation.

27. One is instructed to contemplate these thoughts for as long as one feels necessary and until one truly feels sorry for having created bad karma, i.e., for having sown seeds of bad action and thought.



Dorje Sempa. Dorje Sempa (Sanskrit, Vajrasattva) represents a Sambhogakaya form of Buddha, that form which instructs Bodhisattvas on the Path. Meditation upon Dorje Sempa counteracts bad karma and purifies one's understanding.

completely clear and transparent; it is completely white in color. On his crown are five points symbolizing his attainment of the Five Dhyani Buddhas.²⁸ In Dorje Sempa's heart center is the syllable "HUM," in the middle of a moon around the edges of which appears the rotating mantra.

Now offer a prayer to Dorje Sempa: "For myself and all my mother-sentient beings, from all negativities, all diseases, and all superstitions, please let me be cleansed [get out]." (*Offer this prayer with much sincerity.*)

After offering the prayer, visualize this sequence:

1) Much light comes from the "HUM" in Dorje Sempa's heart center and radiates out from his body to all the universes.

2) Then, in the form of much light and amrita, all the Buddha's return blessings to Dorje Sempa's form.

3) Much white light and amrita flows into the "HUM" in his heart center.

4) Then from Dorje Sempa's heart, just like a waterfall, this light and amrita pours into your rTsa-dbU-ma (pronounced "sa-u-ma") [middle vein at the top of your head], comes to your heart center, and spreads through your body. All your ignorance and all your negativities and all their imprints [of ego, disease, bad karma, superstitions, etc.] are completely and quickly dispelled and disappear. The mind becomes very clean and clear and powerful. (Also, at the same time, he sends much light and amrita to all sentient beings.)

All pains and discomforts of your body are dispelled and you experience Dorje Sempa's transcendental happiness. (At the same time higher positive imprints are planted for future times.) Now your body is completely filled with amrita and light; your body has completely become like the body of Dorje Sempa.

Now recite the mantra:

OM BENZAR SATO SA MA YA / MA NU PA LA YA /
BENZAR SATO TUE NO PA TI STHA / DR DHO ME
BHA WA / SU TO SHYO ME BHA WA / SU PO SYO ME
BHA WA / A NU RA KTO ME BHA WA / SA RVA
SIDDHI MME PRA YA CCHA / SA RVA KA RMA SU CA
ME / CI TTAM SRE YAH / KU RU HUM / HA HA HA HA
HO / BHA GA VAN SA RVA TA THA GA TA / BENZAR

28. That is, the Attainment of the Five Wisdoms.

MA ME MU NCA / BENZAR BHA WA MA HA SA MA YA
SA TO AH HUM PHAT.²⁹

Now offer thanks to Dorje Sempa for his great kindness: “By my ignorance, degenerated and being the opposite of vows, Guru Savior, please grant your help. The principle “holding-Vajra,”³⁰ who is of the nature of compassion, to you I go to refuge, to the principle of all beings.”

Now Dorje Sempa tells you, “My son, Dorje disciple, and the son of my lineage, all your delusions and veils and degenerated vows are all purified.”

Then, as white light, he sinks through your sa-u-ma to your heart center and into the “HUM” there. He is absorbed into you, and your three doors of body, speech, and mind become inseparable from Dorje Sempa.

29. The mantra of Dorje Sempa (Sanskrit, Vajrasattva) is the “One-Hundred-Syllable Mantra.”

30. Translation of “Vajradhara.”

XII | THE ANUTTARA-YOGA TANTRA MEDITATIONS

Prayer to the Lama for Initiation

This meditation is taken from a Khagyud text, and was translated by the Venerable Chogyam Trungpa Tulku, who now leads a meditation center in Barnet, Vermont, called "The Tail of the Tiger."

All you holy honored lamas, our spiritual teachers,
Give the Four Initiations ¹ which bring a rich harvest.

1. The Four Initiations of Anuttara-Yoga practice, called 1) the Base Initiation, 2) the Secret Initiation, 3) the Initiation of Wisdom, and 4) the Fourth Initiation. Successful practice of each leads to the attainment of the Four Bodies, respectively, 1) the Nirmanakaya (or Body of Illusion), 2) the Sambhogakaya (or Body of Bliss), 3) the Dharmakaya (or Body of Truth, or Body of the Void), and 4) the Svabhavikakaya (the Essential Body, or Four-in-One Body).

May I get the good result soon on all four bodies.
Bless me, I pray, with the siddhi, the perfection of the four great attainments.

At the very moment when I say this prayer,
The lama is suffused with light
In which is merged the bodies of his gurus and disciples.
Meditate on that form symbolizing
The great uniting of the Triple Gem,
The form which looks like the living body of the Guru-lama.
OM HOLYWATER DORJE

From the center of the Guru's forehead
Stream rays of white light
Which are absorbed into my brow,
Purifying the defilements of my body.
When I have attained the *Base Initiation*,
I can meditate on form,
And as a result become worthy of the *Body of Illusion*.
AH AMRITZA SKULL

From the base of the Guru's throat
Stream rays of red light
Which are absorbed into my throat,
Purifying the words I utter.
When I have obtained the *Secret Initiation*,
I can do the meditation of the yogis,
And as a result become worthy of the *Celestial Body of Bliss*.

From the heart of the Guru
Stream rays of blue light
Which are absorbed into my heart,
Purifying the defilements of my mind.
HUNG JRIKA WISDOM

When I have attained the *Initiation of Wisdom*,
I can meditate on the Higher Yoga Union,
And as a result become worthy of the Dharmakaya, the *Body of the Void*.

From the three places, white, red, and blue, the three lights streaming, absorbed into the three places, purifying all defilements.

When I have obtained the *Fourth Initiation*,
I can meditate on the Mahamudra,²
And as a result become worthy of the *Essential Body* intrinsic in all.

After that, the lama is dissolved in light which is absorbed into myself.

The body, speech, and mind of the lama become mine.
The Three Vajras, no longer separate, are one in me.
All forms are my lama's form, all sounds his voice, all thoughts, his mind.

As this thought arises, we realize our liberation.

OM AH HUM
VAJRA GURU PEMA THOTRENG RTSAL
VAJRA SAMAYA SIDDHI PHALA HUN AH
OM AH HUM
VAJRA GURU PEMA SIDDHI HUM

The Meditation of Padma Sambhava

A story and two meditations of Padma Sambhava are given below. The first meditation is his Sadhana; the second involves the Kriya Tantra practice of absorbing him. One of the most popular objects of meditation, Padma Sambhava is venerated as the most high of the Nirmanakayas.

PADMA'S INITIATION BY A DAKINI³

Padma's next teacher was an ordained dakini⁴ who dwelt in a sandalwood garden in the midst of a cemetery in a palace of skulls. When he

2. Literally, Great Mudra or Great Symbol, the summit of Vajrayana practice.

3. This story is reprinted from Evans-Wentz's *Great Liberation*. Pp. 131-133.

4. A dakini is an Accomplished Being, the wisdom of Buddha.

arrived at the door of the palace he found it closed. Then there appeared a servant woman carrying water into the palace; and Padma sat in meditation so that her water-carrying was halted by his yogic power. Thereupon, producing a knife of crystal, she cut open her breast and exhibited in the upper portion of it the forty-two Peaceful Deities and in the lower portion of it the fifty-eight Wrathful Deities.⁵ Addressing Padma, she said, “I observe that thou art a wonderful mendicant possessed of great power. But look at me; hast thou not faith in me?” Padma bowed down before her, made apology, and requested the teachings he sought. She replied, “I am only a maidservant. Come inside.”

Upon entering the palace, Padma beheld the dakini enthroned on a sun and moon throne, holding in her hands a double drum⁶ and a human-skull cap,⁷ and surrounded by thirty-two dakinis making sacrificial offerings to her. Padma made obeisance to the enthroned dakini, and offerings, and begged her to teach him both esoterically and exoterically. The one hundred Peaceful and Wrathful Deities then appeared overhead. “Behold,” said the dakini, “the Deities. Now take initiation.”

And Padma responded, “Inasmuch as all the Buddhas throughout the aeons have had Gurus, accept me as thy disciple.”⁸

The Sadhana⁹ of Guru Padma Sambhava¹⁰

“The Sadhana of Guru Padma Sambhava” is a very beautiful version translated by the Venerable Chogyam Trungpa Tulku, from a Kargyudpa text.

5. This indicates that the servant girl’s body was a mandala; in this case, the Mandala of Demchog, otherwise known as the “Mandala of the One Hundred Deities.”

6. Tibetan, da-ma-ru.

7. The skull cap is used in certain higher, esoteric rituals.

8. Lama Anagarika Govinda has explained the meanings of the symbols used in this familiar story in his *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism*, pp. 195–198.

9. Sadhana (Sanskrit) means the meditative practice itself.

10. As translated by the Ven. Chogyam Trungpa Tulku, Rinpoche of the Kargyudpa Sect.



Padma Sambhava. Familiarly known as Guru Rinpoche, Padma Sambhava introduced Buddhism (in its Tantric form) into Tibet. He is the deity visualized in the next two meditations.

TAKING REFUGE

AH

Complete purity and profound illumination is the Buddha of
Dharmakaya

The play of that complete purity, arisen without effort is the Dharma
of the Sambhogakaya

Their union in Enlightenment is the Sangha of the Nirmanakaya
In these three things, understanding their true meaning, I take
Refuge (Repeat three times.)

TAKING THE BODHISATTVA'S VOW

AHO

On behalf of all beings, lost for a time in confusion
To free themselves and to return to the origin of their confusion
I take the vow that is no bondage (Repeat three times.)

DISPELLING HOSTILE FORCES

God and devil ¹¹ had their origin in pure mind, therefore no two things
exist

Understanding this, I form the Mandala of Infinite Time and Space
The diamond wall surrounds me and there is no place left for God and
devil

HUM HUM AH

11. God and devil, according to Buddhist doctrine, are creations of the mind, just as are all other "things." When one attains to Complete Enlightenment, he "gets off the wheel of Births and Deaths" and out of all the Six Realms of samsaric existence.

CONSECRATING THE OFFERING

From the womb of wisdom springs forth light of understanding the
entire world
Which becomes in itself an offering neither increasing nor decreasing
OM AH HUM AH LA LA HO

THE MEDITATION OF GURU RINPOCHE

In the world of complete purity
The dwelling places of illumination we set up
Without inside or outside
Their entire form is of light

There in the center is set the throne of the Dharma
The lotus seat of Compassion
And the Sun Throne of Wisdom
And Guru Padma Sambhava is the eternal child who sits there

End and origin of both confusion and realization
He wears the royal robes of the Three Yanas¹²
He holds the Vajra of Means in his right hand
And in his left the Cup of Wisdom filled with ambrosia

He cuts off the heads of aversion, attachment, confusion
And wears them as ornaments on his trident
Which he holds to his side as a consort
He sits in the Vajra position, unmoving in meditation

He chants HUM and PEM drunk upon highest happiness
The Buddhas of the past, present, and future
Shine forth through the pores of his skin
His youthful smile is full of compassion

His three eyes gaze out into the womb of light
Victory is his crown, and the five Buddhas

12. That is, the Hinayana, the Mahayana, and the Vajrayana.

And the illuminated minds of the Gurus and the Protectors
Through the ten directions of space

They are like the rays of the sun
Distinct and yet the same
They are not inventions of the mind
But the expression of the very nature of the universe

THE EMPOWERMENT

AH

This is receiving the empowerment
Form and sound and thought transformed
Into their eternal essence
This is receiving the empowerment
Of the Wisdom of the Five Buddhas
OM AH HUM OM AH HUM SWA HA

CALLING UPON THE DIVINITY

In the northwest of Odiana
You achieve the highest and most wonderful perfection on a lotus flower
So are you famed as the lotus born and many dakinis surround you
I follow after you, approach and bless you
HUM HUM

This land is called the highest, the land of bliss
The great paradise, neither at the center nor away from it
The womb of eternity
First Buddha, everlasting goodness
Guru Padma Sambhava approach and bless me
Understanding that there is neither division between us
Nor coming nor going
Raise my heart as the glorious copper mountain
Clear the confusion caused for a time by the sundering
Of god and mind and universal nature

Grant me the empowerment
That neither gathers nor gives away

You are the father who took the vow
That you would not leave us in the darkness of Samsara
How can you then leave us desolate
This is the age of darkness
And as it sinks down finally into the night
The strength of your vow increases
Awaken us
Show us the face of your loving kindness
And the manner of your awareness
Show us thy power
OM AH HUM VAJRA GURU PADMA TERTING TSAL
VAJRA SAMAYAJAH SIDDHI PHA LA HUM

OFFERING THE THRONE

AH

Those Wisdoms for us we summoned from the womb
Unite into the Mandala of the Great Symbol
Be with us until we reach Enlightenment
JNANA TISHTA AH

PAYING HOMAGE

AH

From the embryo of illumination arose the Mandala of
Indestructible Insight
Without taking up the good or putting aside the evil
I sign that I understand
AH LA LA HO

GIVING THE OFFERING

AH

The world of the five senses is in itself a great offering and I offer it
without attachment

I offer as cakes the four elements, the sun and moon and the whole of
the existing world
I offer the medicine which intoxicates one with wisdom and raises one
out of the lake of the five poisons
I offer the blood of hatred, lust and confusion whom I have slain
HO

This is the offering which is not offered but which remains in itself
This is the offering which is neither offered nor accepted
AH AH

PRAISES

OM
Stillness and movement have merged
In the womb of the uncreated
I praise you, Great Symbol ¹³
All existence has your form
AH

Your stillness utters all sounds
I praise the Great Mantra
Which is your voice
HUM

Your emptiness comprehends all thoughts
I praise the Original Mind
Which is your nature

Praise and Blame
Limit the nature of the Universe
Understanding this
I praise you

13. The meditative method of Mahamudra, and its realization.

REPETITION OF THE MANTRA

OM is the essence, the Dharmakaya

AH is the potential, the Sambhogakaya

HUM is the expression, the Nirmanakaya

VAJRA is the union of these three, the womb of the indestructible

GURU is the inner wisdom that instructs, the central point of the
mandala

PADMA is fearless compassion

SIDDHI is the power of the womb of space, and the keen perceptiveness
that arises out of it

HUM shows that all these qualities are at one in us

One lives in paradise, and among gods, all sounds are the eternal Mantra,

And all thoughts are completely pure and interfused

The Mantra is repeated in a soundless and motionless way, beyond
thought, interpenetrating everything

OM AH HUM VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM

THE DISSOLUTION

These forms seen in vision sprung from the ground in space

Are now dissolving back into that ground

Again the light dawns

The light of the past, the present, the future, and of eternity

AH AH AH

SHARING THE MERIT

I share the merit of this spontaneous virtue

With the embryo of illumination

May all be made one in the wisdom that is all pervading

DISTRIBUTION OF BLESSINGS

One's view of things is all embracing

May the Dharmakaya bring blessings

One's thoughts are in tune with every situation
 May the Sambhogakaya bring blessings
All one's actions spring from this
 May the Nirmanakaya bring blessings
These three become one in the vision of the ground of being
 May the union of the three bring blessings

The Transference of the Body, Speech, and Mind of Padma Sambhava

“The Transference” was translated from a Nyingmapa text and was taught by Tharthang Tulku while at Sarnath, India. Tharthang Tulku is presently teaching at a center in Berkeley, California.

After waking up early in the morning, one should immediately determine where one's awareness is and then clear out the impure air. First one should sit comfortably but upright, without support, in the proper posture (Siddhasana or the like). Then after inhaling slowly through both nostrils, close the left nostril with your left index finger and exhale very slowly out of the right nostril. This has to be done three times. Then close the right nostril with the right index finger and exhale very slowly out of the left nostril. This has to be done six times in all (three times right, three times left). Then exhale three times without closing the nostrils and then three times through the mouth only. These should be deep exhaling attempts, i.e., one should try to take out all the breath from the body, particularly from the stomach.

While exhaling from the right nostril, one should think that dark red color is being emitted from the nostril. This dark red is the color symbol of ROGA (disease) and RAGA (attachment). While exhaling from the left nostril one should imagine that pale blue-gray-colored mist is being emitted. This is the symbol of obstacles (primarily mental obstacles) and anger (Dvesa). While exhaling through both nostrils and the mouth, we should imagine that we are emitting purplish-colored mist which symbolizes MOHA (sloth, delusion, bewilderment). Repeat three times through nostrils and three times through the mouth.

Now you are purified. Now visualize Padma Sambhava, visualize physically, i.e., looking intently and closely into the minutest details of

Padma Sambhava's figure or picture. The picture is not three-dimensional, but one should visualize Padma Sambhava three-dimensionally, but again in a special way. We should not think that he is just like us, with all the anatomical and physiological qualities and details. He is like a rainbow, pure, transparent, untouchable, clear. He is all-knowing. Even the minutest part of him knows everything. The Buddhas of the past, present, and future shine from the pores of his skin. Padma Sambhava's figure or picture should be placed about two feet above one's head level. Imagine that he is smiling at us gracefully. He is radiant, his skin has a sheen or gloss, a heavenly brilliance. He can be visualized as being either eight or sixteen years old (preferably sixteen). He is the incarnation of all Jnanendras, the embodiment of Tri-kaya. You should totally surrender yourself to him through total devotion. Do not think that he will bestow certain qualities or things upon you. You just surrender. If one has true faith and love for him, one may find that his or her eyes become wet. One thing more, this Padma Sambhava's vision is also the vision of your Guru.

We should also visualize that in Padma Sambhava's forehead center is a white OM, in his throat center a red AH, and in his heart center (mind center) a blue HUM; these are not to be seen as superimposed over the body but as an innate part of the rainbowlike figure. After properly visualizing such a Padma Sambhava, we chant the mantra [which is not given here] and while chanting the mantra (or after the chanting), we should think that from the white OM in the center of Padma Sambhava's forehead is emitting a pure white beam of light directly to our forehead center. This light destroys all bodily sins and wrongs, and transfers all the qualities of the body (kaya) of Padma Sambhava. From his speech center, red AH is emitting a red beam of light to our speech center, which destroys lapses of speech, untruth spoken, and which transfers the qualities of speech (vak) of Padma Sambhava. From his heart center the crystal blue HUM emits a beam of similar color to our heart center, which destroys our moha, wrongs done in ignorance, wrongs done in thought, and thus the qualities of mind (chit) of Padma Sambhava are transferred. Then multicolored beams emanate from every pore of the figure of Padma Sambhava and enter the corresponding parts of our body. We should feel and see this happening. Now visualize Padma Sambhava shrinking from both sides, head and feet, until he is transformed into HUM in the heart center. Now HUM is shaking and lo! suddenly it shoots directly into our heart center just like a shooting star! Water in the two jars become one. No duality. Oneness! (One may remain in this stage for

some time, perhaps not more than twenty minutes.) One has to do this at least three times a day. Under all conditions, even when one is dying, one should do it thrice a day at least. But if one does it three hundred times a day, it is even better. One should not think that one is doing this for one's good, but is doing it for the happiness of all beings, particularly the parents, the poor, the aged, the diseased, etc One must have an attitude of giving rather than receiving or enjoying. One should know from the beginning that he is doing it for others and should think that whatever he has attained he has given to others because it belongs to them and not to him; one should never be miserly or selfish. While visualizing Padma Sambhava, one should control oneself completely. One should not waver at all. When this meditation is finished, every form which you will see becomes the body of Padma Sambhava, every sound which you will hear, the speech of Padma Sambhava, and all action, the mind of Padma Sambhava.

The Fourteen Root and Eight Branch Vows of Vajrayana Concerning the Downfalls (or Defeats) According to the New Tantra

by Sakya Pandita

“The Fourteen Root and Branch Vows” is a text of the Sakyapa Sect. It was composed by Sakya Pandita in the early part of the eleventh century.

(In Sanskrit, the name of this scripture is “Vajrayana Mula-patti.” In Tibetan it is “Dorje Theg-pe T’se-wa’i lTung-wa,” meaning “The Root Downfalls of the Vajrayana.”)

To the youthful Arya Manjusri, I bow down.

That which we talk of is called a root because it is like the root of a tree. If we cut the root, the leaves and branches cannot grow. In the same way, if the root of Vajrayana is not practiced (if we do not avoid the downfalls), we cannot become a Buddha.

The feet of the completely pure Guru are resting on a lotus seat. To them I prostrate, what to speak of the celestial Buddha!

We can count fourteen root downfalls.

Some ignorant persons say there are hundreds and thousands of vows [samaya]. This idea should be given up. It is necessary you should understand what is said in the tantras. The roots are not just my personal opinion. If we care to think about where they are to be found in writing, we should mention the tantras of Guhyasamaja [Sanskrit; Tibetan gSang 'hDus], Yamantaka [Sanskrit; Tibetan, jig phyed, pronounced jig-je], and others. Moreover, they are also written of by Virwapa Lobpon. Some people say that Nagarjuna also mentioned them.

As the result of these vows, the holders of the Vajra in this life or in future lives will gain Siddhis by following their teachers, the Vajra Gurus. So it is written.

1) If one disrespects or disparages one's Guru, that is the first root downfall. If one analyzes what disrespect of the Guru means, being a little angry with him is not disrespect. Disrespect means to say of one's Guru, "This Vajra teacher is bad, and breaks sila . . . he does not follow the path of Dharma." If one thinks like this, this is a root downfall. If one disrespects him a little, it can be purified.

2) If one does not obey what the Buddha said, that is the second root downfall. One should not disregard the early sravaka teachings and the four General Principles, the Bodhicitta, and the four different classes of sins needing expiation according to the Vinaya. One should not say, "The Buddha says this but it does not matter," thus breaking the orders of the Tathagata. If one breaks the eight Basic Dharmas, this is a root downfall. These are also mentioned in the book called *The Twenty sDom-pa*.

3) The third downfall is to be angry with one's Vajra brothers. In Vajrayana, those who enter the Vajra Path are called one's Vajra brothers. If one gets angry with them, that becomes a root downfall. If one has in addition a common Vajra Guru, that is a more serious offense. The most serious root downfall is to be angry with those who have taken initiation with the same Guru, using the same mandala. That is a certain downfall. Again, anger does not only mean fighting. Even if the idea of one's Vajra brother being an enemy arises in one's mind, that is a root downfall. Arguing, fighting with words, can be purified.

To give up loving-kindness to all sentient beings, said the Victorious One, is the fourth root downfall. One should not give up the thought

“May all beings be happy.” Harboring the idea that suffering may increase and giving up loving all beings is a root downfall. More, to give up loving even one being is a root downfall. It can never happen that a person gives up loving all beings whatsoever. Even the merciless raksasas and yaksas have love for their children.

5) To give up the root of Dharma, the Bodhicitta, is the fifth root downfall. That is to say, the root of Mahayana Dharma is the desire to gain enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. To give up the Bodhicitta means to give up that. How can one help all sentient beings if one has a feeling of weakness because one is faced with the suffering of the world. To give up the Bodhicitta, the thought of Enlightenment, is therefore a root downfall.

6) The sixth root downfall is to disparage the Dharma, which is the spiritual objective of oneself and others. That is to say, to think that one’s own Mahayana doctrine and the Hinayana of others both do not show the Path, dispraising them, is a root downfall.

7) To tell about the secret teachings to those who are not spiritually ripe enough is the seventh root downfall. That is to say, it is a root downfall to tell inner teachings to those who have not had initiations—to show them the Vajra and bell, the kapala cup, to explain the secret rules of conduct, and the tshogs [Tibetan; Sanskrit, ganacakra] of the mandala to them. Telling the deep meanings of the secret tantric teachings is a root downfall.

8) The eighth root downfall is to dispraise this body (made up of the skandhas) which contains the Five Buddhas. That is, the five heaps or aggregates [skandhas] are the Five Buddhas. The rupa skandha, the body in the form of matter, is Vairocana [Sanskrit; Tibetan, rnam-par snang-mdsad]. The vedana skandha, feelings, is Ratnasambhava [Sanskrit; Tibetan, rin-chen pyung-ldan]. The samjna skandha, ideations, perceptions, is Amitabha [Sanskrit; Tibetan, od-dpag med]. The samskara skandha, impulses, mental formations, is Amoghasiddhi [Sanskrit; Tibetan, don-yod grub-pa]. The vijnana skandha, consciousness, is Aksobhya. [Sanskrit; Tibetan, mi-khyod-pa]. Not realizing all this and saying that one’s body is a lower type of thing, this is a root downfall.

9) All Dharmas are pure—to doubt this is the ninth root downfall. That is to say, the nature of all things is away from extremes. Not realizing that this is so, and thinking about whether it is this or that extreme, is a root downfall.

10) Always to love enemies and harmful beings is the tenth root

downfall. That is to say, those who disrespect or harm the teaching of the Buddhas; loving those few who are actually harming the teaching of the Buddhas is a root downfall. But, if one thinks that by doing this one is going against what was said before about not giving up love for any sentient being—this is not contrary to that teaching. Although it is felt for the time being that one has given up loving somebody, basically this is not so. It is the same, for example, as when a mother gets angry with a child who goes on the wrong path. If this brings great benefit to sentient beings, it is not a sin, because this action is to help all beings.

11) The eleventh root downfall is to have the wrong realization of the Dharmas which are beyond words. All Dharmas have no self-nature and are beyond extremes. If one positively asserts that all Dharmas are empty, this is falling into an extreme, and so it is a root downfall.

12) The twelfth root downfall is to upset a person who has great faith. That is to say, if anyone has faith in the Buddha's teachings and more particularly in the Mahayana, and has special faith in the tantra, if one conducts oneself by body, voice, or mind in such a way as to spoil their faith, and they subsequently lose faith, that is a root downfall. If one does not act in such a manner that their faith is destroyed, but they lose faith anyway, that is not one's sin.

13) The thirteenth root downfall is not to keep with oneself the things necessary for one's samaya vows. That is to say, if at the times of celebrating the offering puja [Tibetan, Tshogs-mchod] one has not the requisite articles, that is a root downfall.

14) If one disparages women who are of the nature of wisdom, that is the fourteenth root downfall. That is to say, women are the symbol of wisdom and Sunyata, showing both. It is therefore a root downfall to dispraise women in every possible way, saying that women are without spiritual merit [Sanskrit, punya] and made of unclean things, not considering their good qualities. If one says a little against a woman, that can be purified. But if the woman disparaged is a Vajra sister, and one considers her as one's enemy, that is the third and heavier root downfall. If the woman is not actually a Vajra sister, to give up being friendly to her is the fourth root downfall.

If the one who practices the tantra gives up these fourteen things, he will surely gain Siddhis. That is to say, first he will get initiation. Then, if he gives up the fourteen root downfalls, and even if he does not meditate on the Path, he will attain (as the Buddha said) Enlightenment after six-

teen births. The sin of not keeping these is that the vows are spoiled. If one spoils them thinking it does not matter, one will be caught by Mara and will therefore suffer. One will turn downwards and go to hell. Therefore, with these words, we shall learn what to practice and not have these sufferings.

The next step is to put away pride (ego-feeling). One should not think of oneself as very great; by abandoning this we avoid the root downfalls. What is delusion and what is not delusion is to be understood. That is to say, it is very important to remember the rules and keep everything in one's mind. If one is in full control of one's mind when one is doing a thing, and has taken vows and ordinations, then any break of the fourteen vows is a root downfall. If one becomes mad or has not formally taken the vows, then there is no root downfall. If one commits any fault, here is the method of renewing the vows:

One should offer as much as one can to the Guru who meditates. That is to say, if one is not unconscious of what one has done, and has taken vows and ordinations, one should take ordinations again if there is a root downfall. How is this to be done? One must begin again by taking refuge in the Three Jewels. The Enlightenment Thought should be aroused again. Further, one should take the higher initiation [Tibetan, *dwang-bskur*] again in the mandala.

The one who seeks spiritual attainments and who wishes to benefit in this life and in future lives, the follower of the Vajrayana Path, should try to keep the vows and the *dompas* [orders of the Buddha] without loss of time.

This is the end of the discussion of the root downfalls of the Vajrayana.

Next follows an exposition of what are called the "Branch Downfalls." These are like the branches of a tree. If one cuts a tree's branches, it will spoil it a little, but it does not mean it will not grow. Likewise, if one commits the Eight Branch Downfalls, it will cause harm but one will not be reborn in the hells.

If one takes on the path a Vajra partner [consort] who has not taken the vows and initiations, just thinking about it in one's own mind, by doing that one has committed the first branch downfall. If one actually blesses the secret path of somebody, man or woman, who has not had initiation, that becomes the seventh root downfall.

Disputing at the time of the offering rite [Tshogs-mchod], that is to say, actually fighting, becomes the third root downfall, but anybody arguing becomes guilty of the second branch downfall.

The next point refers to showing the secret teachings, that is to say, teaching the symbolic language used at the Tshogs-mchod. Using this language at the wrong time, even to somebody who has had initiation, is the third branch downfall. If, however, one mentions these words to somebody who has not had initiations, this becomes the seventh root downfall.

The teaching of a Dharma contrary to their own to those who have faith, that is to say, to those who have taken the wrong path and who have a desire to get Dharma teaching, to teach such a one a belief he does not want (Mahayana or tantra) without him wishing to hear it, is wrong and is the fourth branch downfall. If by doing that he becomes upset, that develops into the twelfth root downfall.

To stay seven days with a sravaka who is very proud of his faith and against Mahayana and tantra, that is to say, to stay in his home with someone who only believes in Hinayana, for seven days, is the fifth branch downfall. To give secret teachings to someone who has not had the higher initiations, even if he has the lower, and to give the high anuttara-yoga teachings, is the sixth branch downfall. To teach anuttara yoga [Sanskrit; Tibetan, rnal-hbyor bla-na med; pronounced “nal-jor la-na med”] to those who have no initiation at all is the seventh root downfall.

The seventh branch downfall is to show someone the physical mudras who does not know the mudra teaching, and to show, for example, hooks [Tibetan, lchags-kyu] and lasso [Tibetan, shaga-pa] to someone who has even had initiations but has not had the mudra teaching. If one shows this to someone without any initiation at all, that is the seventh root downfall.

To give initiation when one has not said the correct number of mantras and not performing the things prescribed in the actual book of tantra while taking initiation—that is the eighth branch downfall.

To lose either of the two ordinations (Hinayana or Mahayana) without need or reason is wrong. If one has sufficient reason, one is allowed to give up these ordinations.

All followers of the Vajrayana Path [Tibetan, sngags-pa] who commit sins of all kinds lose or finish their vows; and having done this they cannot gain the Siddhis. In this life and the next their suffering increases very much. Therefore, in order to avoid committing these sins, three times

in the day and three times during the night one should recite mantras and prayers daily. Therefore, all these instructions should be followed perfectly. If one has any fault, one should purify it. If one has no fault, one should feel happy!

If anyone wants to find out more about these, he should try to look at the book written by the pure and holy lama Grag-spa rGyal-mtshen: *The Excellent Treatise and Extensive Commentary on the Renouncing of Delusion*. That which I have written is a little bit of this. The person who likes short summaries is not very intelligent, who, due to laziness, is a bit too fond of food and sleep . . . It is to benefit this sort of person that I have written this short summary.

The roots and branches of the Vajrayana Vow are described here by the Sakya Pandita:

KUN-KUN-DGA GYAL-MTSHEN DPAL

The Four Hundred Thousand

The Complete Path

of the Ocean of Deep Meanings,

together with instructions on the basic text

which expand upon, clarify, and express

the contemplative stages of the

Mahamudra preliminary practices—

by the Third Khamtrul Rinpoche

This very thorough translation of the text describing the preliminary practices to the highest stage of Tibetan Tantricism was given by the Third Khamtrul Rinpoche, who resided in the hills north of Dharmasala. The translation is taken from a Kargyudpa text. It represents one of the most complete sets of

instructions for this type of meditation practice to have appeared in English until the present.

“Obeisance to the Precious Ones of the Kargyudpa!

“To Samantabhadra,¹⁴ the Dharmakaya, the first Buddha; to Vajradhara, the Sambhogakaya, having the five certainties; to the Lord of Munis, the Nirmanakaya, the highest revelation of the twelve acts; and to the glorious Padma Sambhava, the Svabhavikakaya;

“To the reverend hosts of the lineage which has only Buddhas; to the feet of my Root Guru of unequalled graciousness; and to the Three Jewels and the Three Roots, the perfect place of refuge . . . to these I bow.

“Empower the saving of all beings, as endless as the sky!”

Any fortunate person who wishes to accomplish, in basic self-knowledge, the fruit of Enlightenment in a single lifetime should enter upon this same supremely deep and unfailing heart of hearts of all paths. The sequence in which one experiences the ordinary practices and so on is:

- 1) Grasping the basics with faith toward the Guru and the Dharma
- 2) Binding the mind well by the ordinary preliminary practices
- 3) Completely purifying the stream of one’s being by the extraordinary (preliminary practices)
- 4) The practice proper: striving toward the goal by contemplating the true nature of things and one’s own mind
- 5) Concluding practices: casting a seal upon one’s virtue in perfect purity
- 6) Guarding one’s yoga continually throughout the day and night.

Only when the outer, inner, and secret agitations have been given up can these meditations and recitations be combined into one through the practice of the secret states of body, speech, and mind.

I) Grasping the basics with faith toward the Guru and the Dharma.

“Glorious and precious Root Guru, dwelling always and inseparably upon the lotus corolla in my own and others’ hearts, I beseech you to bless me by your body, voice, and mind.

“May my single-hearted faith be made firm and unchanging toward the reverend ones of the Drukpa Kargyudpas whose understanding is

14. Samantabhadra, Dorje Chang, and Vajradhara are all names for the Dharmakaya, or Body of Truth.

grown wondrous in the lineage of inner meanings and not in the external lineage of mere words and thought.

“Today I enter with delight into this Dharma of Mahamudra, hard to obtain in a thousand aeons, which is nobler than the low long path, the career of ordinary signification, and whose essence is the Innate, the highest substance of the deep meaning of the great Mantrayana.”¹⁵

II) The ordinary preliminary practices which bind the mind to Dharma (four parts).

IIA) Meditation on the difficulties of obtaining human birth.

“Now that I have obtained the jewel of human birth on this path of despair and hope, the many births of beginningless Samsara, let me cling fast to the benefits of what is hard to obtain, whatever the causes and conditions, and bind myself to the Dharma whose aim is certain and whose counsel is unerring.”

IIB) Meditation on impermanence and death.

“The world of animate and inanimate objects is conditioned, and its substance is impermanent; if death is certain, when will I be without death? If the time of death should appear now, nothing will be of any use; thus let me put forth striving and disgust at the world, for in this life there is no time to spare.”

IIC) Reckoning the causes and effects of karma.

“The ripening of sin is the cause of unwished-for calamity; the fruit of virtuous karma is the basis for auspicious joy. By my firm faith I know exactly what I should abandon and what I should accept, and even without being enjoined to do so I turn toward virtue with skillful means.”

IID) Remembering the punishments of Samsara.

“On the three lower paths suffering is fierce and inexhaustible; and even on the three happy paths there is the suffering of change. Conditioning suffering too is the basis of bondage in Samsara. But as the stream of my being matures, my mind will lose its terrors.”

III) The extraordinary preliminary practices which cleanse the stream of one's being (four parts).

IIIA) The practices of a mind which is a fit receptacle: going

15. Mantrayana, Tantrayana, and Vajrayana are interchangeable.

for Refuge, arousing one's Bodhicitta, etc. . . . which is divided into six parts:

IIIA-1) Mentally going for refuge, as condensed from the sutras.

“To the Buddha, the Dharma, and the highest assembly I go for refuge until Enlightenment is reached. By the merit of my virtuous practice, may I attain Buddhahood for the benefit of all beings.” (Three times.)

IIIA-2) Meditation upon the field of refuge, etc.

Having passed beyond the prospect of impure samsaric appearances, one practices in a land of gold arisen from the syllable LAM before one, a realm of even surface, clear and bright, having all the marks of pleasantness, and spread out in all directions as far as the vault of space. In its midst is a white ocean of amrita arisen from the syllable BAM, having the qualities of the eight classes of spacious ease, and from PAM there arises the precious wish-fulfilling tree, which produces whatever is necessary. In the midst of its seats and boughs, high and pleasing, branching out in the four directions, on a high jeweled throne adorned with ornaments of embroidered silk, upon the surface of a multicolored lotus, a sun and moon, one upon the other, sits Vajradhara, the Reverend Guru, gracious, the heart of the refuges, having a body of knowledge.

Above his head in the sky are the Reverend Ones of the Mahamudra lineage; they are completely clear, one above the other in due order, surrounded on all sides by a multitude of holy personages, the hermits of the doctrine in India and Tibet. In front of him is the yidam Sricakrasamvara [Tibetan, Bdem-chog,¹⁶ pronounced “dem-chog”] surrounded by the hosts of the ocean of new and old divine multitudes. To his right is the Teacher, the King of the Sakyas,¹⁷ surrounded by the hosts of Buddhas of the three times and ten directions. Behind him is the Dharmakaya, the great mother Prajnaparamita,¹⁸ surrounded by a host of texts of the pure and holy Dharma. To his left is the Bodhisattva Lord Avalokitesvara,¹⁹ surrounded by the hosts of the higher and lower Sangha liberated by knowledge. All the spaces in between are filled beyond measure with dakas, dakinis, and dharmapalas, and with a multitude of gods of wealth.

16. Sanskrit, literally, the Greatest Sweetness or Greatest Happiness.

17. That is, the Buddha Gautama.

18. That is, the Perfection of Wisdom.

19. Avalokitesvara is called the greatest of all Bodhisattvas, for his vow to save all sentient beings without exception.

All of them look benignly upon oneself and dwell blazing with great splendor and the dazzling brightness of clear light.

In front of them stand oneself and one's parents of this life, and round about are set fully infinite numbers of sentient beings of the six destinies. Should these beseech for refuge with but a single word, whatever they may need will be accomplished; and thus one should contemplate this supplication of the three gates both one-pointedly and without distraction.

IIIA-3) Prostrations.

One's body is emanated many times in the form of a monk, clear and inconceivably beyond the realm of the numerable; and one does prostrations with devotion of the body, speech, and mind in the company of gracious beings endless as the sky.

"All sentient beings, who are all mothers, as endless as the sky, go for refuge to the Guru, the Dharmakaya of the Buddha.

"All sentient beings, who are all mothers, as endless as the sky, go for refuge to the Guru, the Sambhogakaya.

"All sentient beings, who are all mothers, as endless as the sky, go for refuge to the Guru, the compassionate Nirmanakaya.

"All sentient beings, who are all mothers, as endless as the sky, go for refuge to the Guru, the precious Buddha (Svabhavikakaya)."

(One may do the cycle of these four "mothers . . ." by increasing the number of prostrations: the first time doing a hundred prostrations, the second time two hundred, the third time three hundred, and the fourth time four hundred or a thousand prostrations; or one may condense each part and offer up continually—at the four watches, etc.—a hundred prostrations at a time. Or else, if one does not actually perform prostrations, one should do a measured amount of faithful meditation, practicing to a certain extent in equal combinations, at the four times.)

IIIA-4) Beseeching for one's desires, etc.

"I beseech you to bless my own mind and the minds of all sentient beings to go toward Dharma.

"I beseech you to bless us to go on the Path of Dharma.

"I beseech you to bless us to cleanse the illusions from the Path.

"I beseech you to bless us to change the illusions into knowledge.

"I go for refuge to my Root Guru and to the lineage; I go for refuge to my spiritual brothers and to those who do religious works. I go for refuge to the hosts of the glorious Gurus in the world of animate objects; I go for refuge to the hosts of glorious Gurus who appear in Samsara.

“I beseech you to bless me to free myself by understanding.

“I beseech you to bless me to free others by compassion.

“I beseech you to bless me to become wise in the skillful means of pratitya-samutpada [dependent origination].

“I beseech you to bless me to be possessed of the measure and meaning of pratitya-samutpada.

“I beseech you to empower me to attain in this very life the highest Siddhis of the Mahamudra.”

IIIA-5) Attaining mental refuge.

“I beseech all the hosts of Gurus, Buddhas, great Bodhisattvas, yidams, dakas and yogis who dwell in the ten directions to think of me.

“From this day forward, I who am without a protector and have not attained the heart of Enlightenment, take refuge in the best of men, the lord of the three bodies, the Bhagavan, in order to gain refuge for myself and all beings from the great terrors of Samsara.

“I take refuge in the field freed from desire, Nirvana, the peaceful Dharma.

“I take refuge in the best of assemblies which dwell upon the earth, unfallen from virtue.

“I take refuge in the body which is the essence of all Buddhas, the highest Guru.

“I take refuge in the yidams who grant Siddhis, the deities of the mandala.

“I take refuge in the hosts of dakas, yoginis and dakinis.

“I take refuge in my own innate mind, which is inseparable from Sunyata and Karuna.²⁰

“Before your eyes, O Protectors, I confess with body, speech, and mind my past sins, whatever they may be, and I turn away from sin.

“From this day forward, I will be your servant; instruct me in what I should be taught. Since I do not transgress against your teachings, I beseech you for complete protection. (Having thus taken refuge . . .)

“Just as the Protectors [Buddhas] of the three times surely achieve Enlightenment, I arouse my Bodhicitta, holy, without equal.

“I firmly take upon myself the three virtuous practices: teaching virtuous practice, amassing virtuous Dharma, and serving the aims of beings.

“Having awakened my holy and unequalled Bodhicitta, I take this vow upon myself entirely for the sake of all beings: I will save those who have

20. Sanskrit, compassion.

not been saved; I will rescue those who have not been rescued; I will transfer into Nirvana all beings, those with breath and those without breath.” (Having thus aroused Bodhicitta . . .)

IIIA-6) Meditation on absorbing the field in sequence and on taking refuge in the highest truth.

Absorbing those of the field of refuge who are in the intermediate spaces into the deities, who are in front, one should gather into one the deities, in due order, in a clockwise direction. Then the lineage of Gurus and hermits in the middle dissolve into light from above downwards and are gathered into the Guru [Vajradhara]. And because the Root Guru, the lord of the families, who has had all gathered into himself, is in turn absorbed into oneself, his Vajra body, speech, and mind become intrinsically inseparable from one’s own body, speech, and mind; and this is the highest going for refuge, whose object is innate knowledge.

IIIB) Cleansing the obscurations, meditation upon Vajrasattva and the recitation of his mantra (five parts).

IIIB-1) The method of generation, etc.

From PAM on top of one’s head there arises an eight-petaled white lotus; and from A in its center there arises the orb of a moon, above which there arises from HUM a white five-pronged Vajra marked with HUM in its center. From this HUM, light streams forth, offering to the Aryas and cleansing the sins and obscurations of all beings. Then it is gathered back and absorbed into the HUM and from the transformation thereof arises the Bhagavan Sri Vajrasattva, his body colored white, with one face and two arms, holding a Vajra and bell and embraced by his consort. His consort Vajra Pride [*Dorje sNyems-ma (nyem-ma)*] is white, grasping a curved Vajra knife and a skull cap and embracing her lord. They are both adorned with ornaments of bones and precious gems. He sits with his feet in Vajrasana. At his forehead is OM, at his throat AH, and at his heart HUM, and from HUM, lights stream forth inviting down all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in the form of Vajrasattva himself with his consort.

JAH HUM BAM HO

“O Bhagavan, I beseech you to cleanse and purify the whole host of sins, obscurations, faults, downfalls, and impurities of myself and of all the infinite numbers of beings.”

IIIB-2) Meditation upon cleansing the obscurations and reciting the mantra.

At the heart of Vajrasattva, the Guru, reality, the all-pervading lord of

the hundred families, having a Vajra body which, like a rainbow, is manifest and yet empty; at his heart there is a moon, in the center of which is a Vajra; and in its center is the seed syllable HUM, encircled about the edge by the hundred-syllable mantra. From that HUM, from the mantra garland, and from the Vajra there falls a stream of amrita whose essence is the empowerment of body, speech, and mind. As this comes forth from the place of connection between the lord and his consort and flows over the outside of one's body, all one's external dirt is washed away; and, as it enters through the hole for internal cleansing, things which have the aspects of demons of diseases and noxious insects come forth in succession from one's anus, and all one's sins, obscurations, faults, and downfalls come forth all black from every pore as sooty liquid, dirty water, and smoke; and one's essence becomes greatly washed, cleansed, and purified. Having thus contemplated, one recites:

OM VA JRA SA TVA SA MA YA MA NU PA LA YA
 VA JRA SA TVA THE NO PA TI STHA DR DHO ME
 BHA VA SU TO SHYO ME BHA VA A NU RA KTO ME
 BHA VA SU PO SYO ME BHA VA SA RVA SI DDHI
 ME PRA YA CCHA SA RVA KA RMA SU CA ME CI
 TTAM SRE YAH KU RU HUM HA HA HA HA HO BHA GA
 VAN SA RVA TA THA GA TA VA JRA MA ME MU
 NCA VA JRI BHA VA MA HA SA MA YA SA TVA AH

IIIB-3) Arousing faith in the empowerment of purity.

Because one has been purified in this way, one's body constitution is now pure as white brilliant crystal, and all sins, obscurations, faults, and downfalls of the three gates, along with any propensities thereto, are completely cleansed away. One's body is filled with the stream of amrita of knowledge, the essence of the empowerment of the three secrets: the Vajra of Guru Vajrasattva, the elements of one's body, speech, and mind, and one's nadi, vayu, and bindu are transformed into a body, speech, and mind of the unobscured brilliance of the rainbow of knowledge, of Vajra.

"OM VA JRA SA TVA HUM AH." (Thus one should recite the hrdaya mantra.)

IIIB-4) Confession, repentance, and offering.

"O Protector, through delusion and ignorance I have transgressed and defiled my samaya vows.²¹ May the Guru Protector be a refuge for me! I

21. Samaya means a vow made between oneself and the Buddha. It is a bond between one who meditates and the goal of meditation itself.

take refuge in the lord, the great bearer of the Vajra, having the sovereignty of great compassion, the chief of beings. I repent and confess all my defilements of the basic and subsidiary samaya vows, whether by body, speech, or mind. I beseech you to cleanse and make pure the whole host of my sins, obscurations, faults, and downfalls.

Because one has thus beseeched him, from the lips of Vajrasattva assent will be given: “O son of the lineage, all the sins, obscurations, faults, and downfalls of your three gates are now purified.”

IIIB-5) Knowing Vajrasattva by absorbing him into oneself and turning over merit.

Finally, by the power of one’s great devotion, the Guru Vajrasattva and his consort are also dissolved into oneself. One enters into samadhi with the Primordial Protector, the all-pervading and the intrinsically pure and non-objectifiable mandala.—The act of cleansing the sins and obscurations, his mind (the Cleanser) and one’s own mind (the Cleansed)—becomes without any duality.

“Thus may this fruit be obtained by myself and all beings.”

IIIC) Offering the mandala of the perfect host (three parts).

IIIC-1) Meditation upon the mandala which forms the field of offering.

In front of one is Mount Sumeru, whose essence is the four precious gems, adorned with four corners, four terraces, and a pinnacle, of vast extent and lofty, reaching to the very top of the universe. On top of it is a four-petaled lotus which encircles its rim; and in the center of that is a throne supported by lions upon which is the Root Guru,²² the Lord Vajradhara, surrounded by the hosts of all the reverend ones of the Mahamudra lineage and all the Gurus and hermits of the extended lineage. On the eastern petal, upon an elephant throne, is Sri Cakrasamvara and the host of yidams; on the southern petal, upon a horse throne, is the lord of Munis and the host of Buddhas of the three times; on the western petal, upon a peacock throne, is the Dharmakaya, the Great Mother, and the hosts of texts of the holy Dharma; and on the northern petal, upon a garuda throne, is Lord Avalokitesvara and the host of the noble Sangha. In the intermediate spaces, all the refuges—along with hosts of dakas, dakinis, dharmapalas, lords of wealth—are perfectly clear; and in the ten

22. One’s Root Guru is his direct teacher. One is initiated directly through him.

directions, furthermore, the retinue of fierce and peaceful Jinaputras, who dwell in the field of Maitreya, form an object of offering.

IIIC-2) Presenting the mandala of offerings, which has seven parts.

IIIC-2i) Obeisance.

“I do obeisance with my body, speech, and mind to every single one of the lions among men who come in the three times to however many worlds there may be in the ten directions.

“By the power of my prayer of virtuous practice, and by having bowed my body manifestly before the minds of all the Jinas as many times as there are particles of dust in a field—by this I make obeisance to all the Jinas.

“I venerate everything which has been fulfilled by the Jinas,²³ the Buddhas so numerous that to count them is like comparing one particle of dust to all the dust in the world, all those who dwell amidst the sons of the Buddhas, and all those without exception who dwell in the Dharmadhatu.²⁴

“Repeating the virtues of the Jinas with all the sounds of the ocean of the tones of speech, the inexhaustible oceans of their praise, I praise all the Sugatas.”

IIIC-2ii) Mandala and offering (two parts).

IIIC-2iia) Mandala (two parts).

IIIC-2iia(1)) Basic materials: offering with actually acquired goods or else by an extensive, perfect and clear visualization with most excellent pleasing things just through mudra.

OM VAJRA BHUMI AH HUM!

The foundation is pure, greatly strong, founded with gold.

OM VAJRARESE AH HUM!

In the center is Mount Sumeru, King of Mountains, with HUM in its middle, encircled on the outside by a ring of iron mountains.

In the east is Purvavideka, in the south is Jannbudvipa, in the west is Aparagodaniya, in the north is Uttarakuru. Toward the east are Deha and Videha; toward the south are Camara and Aparacamara; toward the west are Satha and Uttaramantriva; toward the north are Kurava and Kaurava.

23. Sanskrit, literally, Conquerors, applied to all Buddhas.

24. Sanskrit, the entirety of realms of existing things.

There is a jewel mountain, a wishing tree, a wish-fulfilling cow, and the harvest which comes without plowing; there are the jewels of the wheel, gem, queen, minister, elephant, horse, and general; there is the flask of great treasure. There are the eight goddesses offering sensuousness, garlands, song, dance, flowers, incense, lamp, and perfumed water. There are the sun and the moon; there is the jeweled canopy and the banner of total victory in all quarters. And in the middle there is the entire host of wealth and glory of men and gods.

“With this pure and pleasing field, these clouds of offerings drawn from the ocean of realms belonging to the virtuous hosts of the three times, these enjoyments of my own and others’ bodies—with these I make devoted offering to the holy and glorious Gurus, both the gracious Root Guru and the lineage, to the yidam and the divine hosts of his mandala, to the three most precious jewels, to all the dakinis, dharmapalas, lords of wealth and guardians of treasure and their retinues, and to the Jinas of the three times and the ten directions, to their sons and pupils.

“I beseech you to accept this with compassion for the sake of beings; and having accepted it, I beseech you to grant blessings.

GURU IDAM MANDALAKAM NIRYATAYAMI!

IIIC-2iia(2)) Prayer.

“By offering up this virtuous and pleasing mandala, may hindrances not arise on the path to Enlightenment. Perfecting the reflections of the Jinas of the three times, may I not go astray in Samsara nor become trapped in Nirvana. May beings as endless as the sky be saved!”

IIIC-2iib) Section on offering.

“I make offering to these Jinas with holy flowers, holy garlands, with cymbals, ointments, and the best canopies, with the best butter lamps and holy incense—I make offering to these Jinas with holy garments and the best scents, and with five medicinal powders piled as high as Mount Sumeru, with all the best of the nobler things specially arrayed. I venerate all these Jinas with every single unequalled and vast offering. By the pure power of my faith toward virtuous practice, I make obeisance and offering to all the Jinas.”

IIIC-2iia) Confession of sins (two versions, expanded and abridged).

IIIC-2iia) Recitation according to the Triskhandha sutra.

“I and all sentient beings go for refuge to the eternal gem, to the Buddha, to the Dharma, and to the Sangha.

“Obeisances to the Bhagavan Tathagata Arhat Anuttara-samyak-sambuddha Sakyamuni.

“Obeisance to He who conquers by the essence of Vajra, to Radiating Light of the Precious Gem, to Wishing Gem of the Nagas, to Chief of Dakas, to Glorious Rejoicing, to Jewel Fire, to Jewel Moonlight, to Unfailing Vision, to Jewel Moon, to Stainless . . . [the list continues with 24 more names].

“I beseech all these Buddha Bhagavans who dwell, live, and prosper in however many Tathagata-Arhat-Anuttara-samyak-sambuddha-Bhagavan worldly realms there may be in the ten directions—I beseech them to think of me.

“I confess every single sinful deed done by myself or others in all my lives whirling about in Samsara, in this life or in any of my beginningless and endless lives, or which I did by command or in the doing of which I afterward approved, such as:

“Appropriating for myself the wealth of a stupa, of a particular Sangha or of the universal Sangha, appropriating it by command or afterwards approving of its appropriation;

“Doing the five sins of immediate retribution, doing them by command or afterwards approving of them;

“Setting out upon the path of the ten improper acts, doing them by command or afterwards approving of them;

“And I confess those karmic obscurations obscured by which I go among hell-beings, to the womb of animals, to the realm of pretas, or by which I am born in a border country or among barbarians or am born among the long-lived gods, or by which I am born with incomplete faculties or cling to wrong views, or by which I do not pay respect at the arising of a Buddha.

“All these things which are known by the Buddha Bhagavans, which they observe, which they witness, which they measure, which they understand, which they see—all these things I confess before their eyes, I repent, I do not hide, I do not conceal. Cutting them off hereafter, I make my vow, and I beseech all the Buddha Bhagavans to think of me.

“I turn over all the merit gained by myself or others in all my lives whirling about in Samsara, in this life or in any of my beginningless and endless lives, even so far as any root of virtues gained by giving a single morsel of food to one born in the womb of an animal, any root of virtue gained by my keeping virtuous practice, any root of virtue gained by my dwelling in pure practice, any root of virtue gained by my helping to make

sentient beings mature, any root of virtue gained by my arising Bodhicitta, any root of virtue gained by supreme knowledge—gathering all these together and adding them up, I turn it all over for the sake of the supreme, the ultimate, the highest of the high, the greatest of the great; I turn all over for the sake of supreme and perfect Enlightenment.

“Just as the Buddha Bhagavans of the past turned over their merit, just as the Buddha Bhagavans of the present turn over their merit, and just as the Buddha Bhagavans of the future will turn over their merit—in just the same way, I turn over my merit.

“I confess all my various sins; I rejoice in all the merits. Exhorting all the Buddhas, I pray: May I attain the holy and supreme highest knowledge; joining my hands in reverence, I go for refuge to every single one of the Jinas, the best of men, whether they dwell in the present or are of the past or future. I confess every one of the ten improper acts: the three sorts which are committed through bodily action, the four sorts committed through speech, and the three sorts committed by mind. I confess all my sins, committed from beginningless time up to the present, the ten improper acts and the five sins of immediate retribution, and all those which arise through being under the power of mental defilements.”

(If one recites this confession, even the five sins of immediate retribution, all those which arise through being under the power of mental defilements, and all one’s moral downfalls will thereby be quickly and entirely purified.)

IIIC–2iii b) Abridged version.

“I confess all the different sins I have committed by body, speech or mind under the influence of lust, hatred, and delusion.”

IIIC–2iv) Section on rejoicing.

“I rejoice in the merits of all beings, of all the Jinas and Buddhaputras of the ten directions, the pratyekabuddhas, those who are in training and those who are beyond training.”

IIIC–2v) Section on exhortation to turn the wheel of Dharma.

“I exhort the lamps of the worlds of the ten directions, the Buddhas on the stage of enlightenment, who have attained desirelessness—I exhort all these Protectors to turn the supreme wheel.”

IIIC–2vi) Section of prayer not to enter Nirvana.

“With folded palms I pray to all those who wish to demonstrate Nirvana, to remain for as many kalpas as there is dust on a field, for the sake of the joy and benefit of all beings.”

IIIC–2vii) Section on turning over merit for Enlightenment.

“Whatever little merit I have accumulated for my obeisance, worship, confession, rejoicing, exhortation, and prayer, I turn it all over for the sake of Enlightenment.”

IIC-3) Stages of absorption and the meaning of the mandala.

The field of offering and all its retinue is dissolved in the all-pervading Guru. The Guru dissolves in light and is inextricably mixed with oneself. The offering, the offerer, and the field of offering are one. . . .

GLOSSARY

- ACARYA** A saint, a title applied to a very learned teacher or pandit.
- AMITABHA** The Buddha of Infinite Light (of the Western Paradise).
- ANANDA** A cousin of the Buddha (Gautama), famed for hearing and recording His teachings.
- ANUTTARA-SAMYAK-SAMBODHI** Unexcelled, perfect, complete Enlightenment; an attribute of every Buddha.
- ARHAT** The highest ideal in Theravada teachings, a saint having attained Nirvana.
- AVALOKITESVARA** (Tibetan, Chenresig) The disciple of Gautama Buddha who vowed to save all living beings, the greatest of all Bodhisattvas.
- BODHI** Enlightenment.
- BODHICITTA** The Enlightenment Mind, the mind state arising of Mahakaruna (boundless compassion); the persistent thought in one's heart of the welfare of all beings.
- BODHISATTVA** The highest ideal according to Mahayana teachings; one

who seeks to attain Enlightenment for the benefit of all beings and, in order to do so, practices the six Transcendental Virtues (Paramitas) and All-encompassing Compassion.

BUDDHA (Tibetan, Sangs-rgyas) The Fully Enlightened One, completely free of all delusion and illusion; the Fully Awakened One.

CAKRA In yoga, one of the areas of concentrated energies.

CHENRESIG The Tibetan name for Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, the Buddha of Compassion.

CITTA A single state of the mind, the mind at any second of time.

DALAI LAMA "Ocean of Wisdom," the title given to the Grand Lamas of all the Tibetan Buddhist sects, the title given especially to the secular and religious head of Tibet as the reincarnation of Chenresig.

DHARMA The complete teachings and doctrines of Buddhism, the full realization and explanation of the Path to Enlightenment; also dharma: any existing thing or event.

DHARMADHATU The entire realm of existing things.

DHARMAKAYA The "Body of Truth," the formless body of a Buddha.

DHYANA Meditation, the deep absorptions.

DIPAMKARA BUDDHA "The Buddha of the Past," who predicted the Buddhahood of Gautama.

DORJE CHANG Tibetan name for the Dharmakaya, especially according to the Gelugpa Sect.

DORJE SEMPA The "Diamond Thought," one of the Sambhogakaya forms of Buddha.

GESHE Tibetan for learned teacher, equivalent to the Indian "pandit."

HINAYANA "The Lesser Vehicle," the earlier tradition of Buddhism, the preliminary teachings of Lord Buddha.

KARMA The law of cause and effect and of certain retribution for all deeds, good or bad.

KLESA Mental defilements, all hindrances to a clear view of the Truth.

LAMA Tibetan for a Guru, or teacher.

LOTSATVA A translator, especially of religious texts.

MAHAMUDRA The "Great Symbol," the primary teachings of the Kargyud-pa sect of Tibetan Buddhism. (The two main principles of the practice are upaya, "means," and prajna, "wisdom.")

MAHAYANA The "Greater Vehicle," the second stage of practice in the Buddha's teaching.

MAITREYA (Tibetan, jampa) The "Future Buddha," or Buddha-to-be.

MANDALA A model of the "universe of mental forces."

- MANJUSRI** (Tibetan, Jampalyang) A Maha-Bodhisattva who is the embodiment of and symbol for the Buddha's wisdom.
- MANTRA** (Tibetan, snags) A spiritual sound capable of quieting the mind to prepare it for attaining the truth.
- MUDRA** (Tibetan, pronounced chag-gya) A position of fingers, hands or body used with certain meditation practices.
- NIRMANAKAYA** (Tibetan, tulku) The "Created Body" of a Buddha.
- PARAMITA** Crossing from this shore of Samsara to the other shore, Nirvana, one of the Transcendental Virtues practiced by a Bodhisattva.
- PRAJNA** (Tibetan, sesrab) The Wisdom of a Buddha, the highest discriminating vision or wisdom.
- RINPOCHE** An incarnation of a former high lama.
- SADHANA** Meditation, the full and entire practice.
- SAMADHI** The state of imperturbability in meditation, the state which precedes the attainment of Buddhahood.
- SAMANTABHADRA** The name for the Dharmakaya, especially according to the Nyingmapa Sect of Tibetan Buddhism.
- SAMATHA** (Tibetan, Zhi-gNas) The state of mind of complete quiet and peace in meditation.
- SAMAYA** Holy vows, a bond with the Buddha.
- SAMBHOGAKAYA** The "Enjoyment Body" or "Body of Bliss" of a Buddha.
- SAMSARA** This phenomenal world, the realm of births and deaths.
- SANGHA** The monkhood, the enlightened followers of the Buddha; also the Holy Sangha, the disciples contemporary with Gautama Buddha.
- SASTRA** Commentaries on sutras.
- SIDDHI** A realization or power attained through meditation practices, the fruition of Sadhana.
- SUTRA** The Buddha's words, the written doctrine.
- SRAVAKA** A hearer or disciple of the Buddha, in the Theravada tradition.
- SROTA-APANNA** One who has "entered the stream" of holy living, the first stage of attainment in the Hinayana Path.
- SUNYATA** (Tibetan, ston-pa-nid) Voidness, the illusory and relative nature of all existing things.
- TANTRA** (Tibetan, pronounced gyud) To weave, yogic method (mind/physical).
- TARA** (Tibetan, dölma) The female embodiment of all the Buddhas, the Goddess in Buddhism.
- TATHAGATA** One of the highest titles of a Buddha: "He who has not come or gone," "He who came as did all Buddhas."

- THERAVADA** The earlier tradition of Buddhism; referred to as “Hinayana” in Mahayana teachings.
- TRI-KAYA** The Three Bodies of all Buddhas.
- TRIPLE GEM** The most precious object of worship according to Buddhism: the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.
- T’SONG KHAPA** The founder of the reformed sect (the Gelugpa) of Tibetan Buddhism. Also called “Je Rinpoche.”
- TULKU** Tibetan for Nirmanakaya; also a Rinpoche, or reincarnation of a former lama.
- TUSITA** The Pure Land of Maitreya, who will descend to earth as the next Buddha.
- VAJRA** The indestructible, the diamond wisdom of the Buddha.
- VAJRADHARA** “Vajra-holding,” the name for the Dharmakaya, especially according to the Kargyudpa Sect of Tibetan Buddhism.
- VAJRAPANI** (Tibetan, Chagna Dorje) The embodiment of the Buddha’s power (Siddhi).
- VAJRASATTVA** (Tibetan, benzar sato) One firmly established upon the Vajrayana Path, one of the Buddha forms of Vajrayana deities.

**The light of the Eastern dawn is diamond light.
Like the diamond, it is brilliant and everlasting;
Like the vajra [diamond], it is indestructible wisdom.**

Here is a unique and fascinating introduction to the practice of Tibetan Buddhist meditation—a discipline that lies at the heart of a religious philosophy increasingly studied and followed around the world today.

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The author has studied intensively with a Gelugpa (sect) Geshe (highest teacher) in Buddhist Dharma and meditation, and her approach is a lucid and sympathetic treatment of both a complex heritage and a way of life.

**May the indestructible and all-encompassing wisdom
Of the Vajrayana, the Diamond Vehicle,
Illumine our dark world with the Diamond Light.**

