

Treasures from  
**JUNIPER RIDGE**



THE PROFOUND TREASURE INSTRUCTIONS  
OF PADMASAMBHAVA  
TO THE DAKINI YESHE TSOGYAL

Commentary by Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche  
Translated and Edited by Erik Pema Kunsang  
& Marcia Binder Schmidt



*Treasures from  
Juniper Ridge*

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THE PROFOUND TREASURE INSTRUCTIONS OF  
PADMASAMBHAVA  
TO THE DAKINI YESHE TSOGYAL

*Recorded and concealed by Yeshe Tsogyal*

From the revelations of Nyang Ral Nyima Özer, Rigdzin Gödem,  
Sangye Lingpa, Rinchen Lingpa, Dorje Lingpa, Jamyang Khyentse  
Wangpo, and Chokgyur Lingpa

*Translated and edited by*  
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NAMO GURU DHEVA DHAKKINI HUNG

EMAHO

*Lotus-Born, unchanging like a vajra is your form.*

*Your voice of conquerors is egoless, the Dharma tones resound.*

*Omniscient is your mind, a treasury of all that is profound.*

*To you, my lord and savior of all beings, I sincerely bow.*





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## *Translator's Preface*

*Treasures from Juniper Ridge* is the third volume of a collection of treasure teachings given by Padmasambhava during his stay in Tibet in the ninth century. Most of the pieces presented here and in the earlier two books, *Dakini Teachings* and *Advice from the Lotus-Born*, are questions and answers between Padmasambhava and his main students, especially the dakini Yeshe Tsogyal. In the unfolding of this delightful and inspiring project over the years, a gradual progression naturally occurred.

The first volume, *Dakini Teachings*, is composed primarily of the profound foundational trainings such as refuge, bodhichitta, deity, and guru practices. The treasure revealers are Nyang Ral Nyima Özer and Sangye Lingpa. *Advice from the Lotus-Born* takes the teachings to a slightly deeper level, being comprised of instructions on view, meditation, and conduct. In addition to the first two treasure revealers, Rigdzin Gödem and Chokgyur Lingpa are represented.<sup>1</sup>

This third volume, *Treasures from Juniper Ridge*, has the most subtle and insightful guidance of all. These selections are for the more seasoned practitioner with emphasis on the view and the combination of conceptual and non-conceptual meditations.

This volume is based primarily on the revealed terms of the 12th century tertön, Nyang Ral Nyima Özer (1124-1192). The manu-

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1. In *Dakini Teachings* more detailed stories are included about the two major tertöns, Nyang Ral Nyima Özer and Sangye Lingpa.

scripts that I have used were kept in the Royal Danish Library, having been brought back from a Mongolian monastery by Henning Haslund Christiansen, a Danish explorer of Central Asia. When Dilgo Khyentse visited the library in 1976, he asked to be shown all the original handwritten manuscripts and decided to have photocopies made of six volumes of books that were unavailable at that time in India. Among these six were a collection of some of Nyang Ral's termas called *Jomo Shulen*, (The Questions and Answers of the Lady Tsogyal).

Other teachings are included in *Juniper Ridge* come from such termas as Nyang Ral's *Martri*, Sangye Lingpa's *Lama Gongdü Cycle*, Rigdzin Gödem's *Gongpa Zangtal Cycle*, Rinchen Lingpa's *Chigchö Kündröl Chenpo*, and the rediscovered treasures of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo and Chokgyur Lingpa.

In the earlier volumes, we were reticent to present too much emphasis on the view, fearing that it would be misunderstood. However, in the fifteen years since the publication of *Dakini Teachings*, the growing audience of Dharma students has been fortunate to gain access to many very deep and previously secret teachings which are now available in modern languages. As the Dharma matures in the West and more and more wonderful translators manifest, this trend will continue to the benefit of modern practitioners. Coupling these circumstances with Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche's command, "Translate everything. Remain faithful to the original. Don't correct anything and don't leave out the view, otherwise Padmasambhava looks too pietistic," we felt authorized to offer the collection presented here.

"The Treasure of the Lotus Crystal Cave," which forms the final chapter of our volume, differs from the others chapters in that it recounts Padmasambhava's personal development at the feet of his guru, Shri Singha.

In conclusion I would like to thank everyone involved in this endeavor. First of all, I have incredible gratitude to Padmasambhava's

compassionate brilliance in bestowing upon us these inspiring and astounding teachings, to Yeshe Tsogyal for devotedly recording and hiding them, to the tertöns for revealing them, and to Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche for giving me the courage and encouragement to translate them.

Thanks also go to the Dharma friends who helped produce this book, to Marcia Schmidt for constant prodding to complete the work, to Michael Tweed for his skilful editing, to Ward Brisick for editing “The Treasure of the Lotus Crystal Cave,” to the copy editor, Meghan Howard, to the proofreaders, Zack Beer and Catherine Dalton, to the typesetter Joan Olson, and of course to the production sponsor, Richard Gere, who has shown constant kindness and support over many years.

There are many blessings in being able to work with such beautiful material. I only pray that I have been up to the task in presenting even a fraction of its profundity. By the power of Padmasambhava’s marvelous activity and insight, may all beings connected to him gather in his presence in the Copper-Colored Mountain’s Realm of Splendor.

*Erik Pema Kunsang*  
*Completed at Rangjung Yeshe Gomd , Denmark,*  
*on the lunar calendar’s auspicious fifteenth day*  
*of the first month, 2008*



## *Introductory Teachings*

Padmasambhava's pith instructions are extremely important because he is not just a legendary figure or an ancient myth. He is an actual person who continuously carries out spontaneous activities, including manifesting as the treasure revealers, so that there is always a fresh, unimpaired teaching that people can practice. This also ensures that Padmasambhava's spiritual influence and blessings are unceasing.

Before he left Tibet Padmasambhava concealed many teachings to be uncovered later by special individuals who are known in Tibetan as *tertöns* or "revealers of hidden treasure." Because of changes and fluctuations in world history, Padmasambhava concealed specific practices especially suited to various times in the future. These hidden teachings, known as *termas*, are later revealed by the future incarnations of Padmasambhava's personal disciples, great masters who are in turn often emanations of Padmasambhava himself. The special quality of these terma teachings is that they provide a method for accomplishment that is appropriate for each specific generation, period of time, and individual person who meets them. *The treasure teachings he gave on the Juniper Ridge of Crystal Pearls* contain the essential meaning of hundreds of such instructions.

The compiler of these teachings, Yeshe Tsogyal, was an emanation of a female buddha known as a wisdom *dakini*. By working with Padmasambhava as his main disciple, she was able to provide a great service to humanity by compiling and codifying these precious teachings and hiding them for future generations.

In Kham there is a saying, "Tell it all, like a sack turned inside out." Likewise, in these *Treasures from Juniper Ridge*, Padmasambhava has turned his sack inside out—he has completely disclosed everything. The essential meaning of hundreds of teachings is contained here; he completely laid it bare.

So, when my student Erik Pema Kunsang consulted me as to what to translate of the questions and answers between Padmasambhava and his disciples, I told him to translate everything. You need a complete collection, and it does not do to exclude the teachings on the view, to leave them out. If you do that, Padmasambhava's teachings will not be complete.

Although there is nothing I can add to this collection, I would like to expand upon a few points as a positive coincidence. Before we have stabilized the correct view, we primarily experience samsaric phenomena, which are distorted. In order to experience in the right way, we need to depend upon the teachings of a wisdom being and then actualize in practice what we have been taught in practice.

Here is a traditional perspective about samsaric phenomena:

First nonexistence is taught, and the empty essence is explained.

Next existence is taught, and the cognizant nature is explained.

Finally the unity of existence and nonexistence is taught.

This means that the essence and nature, primordial purity and spontaneous presence, are a unity within *rigpa*, awareness. Therefore samsaric phenomena are said to appear while nonexistent. Regarding their essence, they are nonexistent; regarding their nature, they are manifest. The empty and apparent aspects of distorted phenomena cannot be separated. Undistorted, pure phenomena are the unity of primordial purity and spontaneous presence. They transcend objects



of dualistic perception, like a rainbow appearing in the sky. It is visible but lacks self-nature; there is nothing to grasp and nothing to hold. This is the example for pure, undistorted phenomena.

Phenomena, as perceived by sentient beings, became coarser and coarser. Phenomena first began with the samsaric realm called Neither Presence Nor Absence of Conception. From there we strayed into the three realms of samsara where we wandered due to clinging to the apparent aspect. First the four limitless perceptions of the formless realms appeared, then the seventeen worlds of the form realm. Next came the six worlds of the gods in the desire realms, and finally the six classes of beings.

As expressed by the Kagyü masters, "Coemergent mind-essence is dharmakaya; coemergent appearance is the light of dharmakaya." Here appearance refers to undistorted, pure phenomena. Distorted phenomena have become increasingly gross. The four realms of infinite perception are formless; the form in the seventeen god realms is a form of light. Becoming grosser, bodily forms are made of flesh and blood in the six worlds of the desire realm.

The external distorted phenomena are the four major elements of earth, water, fire, and wind. In between, we have the flesh and blood, bones, body heat, breath, the aggregates, and sense factors. Nonetheless, all phenomena, since the very beginning, lack concrete existence. In last night's dream we experienced joy and sorrow, countries and places, houses and castles, and so forth. We can dream of all these things, but upon waking, what was dreamt no longer exists. Right now all phenomena definitely exist due to the power of confusion.

However upon attaining stability in rigpa, we are no longer confused; and so, as a sign of the primordial nonexistence of all phenomena, we can traverse freely through them. If all phenomena existed primordially, the buddhas would have to annihilate them in order to traverse through them; but they do not need to. Phenomena possess not even an atom of concrete existence, though we feel they do due

to our distorted ways of experiencing. To a hell being with conceptual thoughts, for example, hell seems to have a material existence. When free from conceptual thoughts, there is no real hell.

A master like Padmasambhava could traverse freely through rocks and mountains because of his stability in primordial purity, in self-existing wakefulness. Padmasambhava had amazing miraculous powers, such as the ability to fly through the sky, traverse freely through solid matter, and be unimpeded in expounding all the sutras and treatises as well as the meaning of the tantras. These are other reasons why there are such great blessings in connecting to his instructions and advice.

At some future stage we will possess all the enlightened qualities and will have purified all the obscurations, and, by doing so, we will attain the state of unsurpassable enlightenment. Before that, however, sentient beings do not experience the domain of full enlightenment. It would be wonderful if ordinary sentient beings could experience enlightenment. It is said that when you attain it nothing is impure, neither sights nor sounds nor states of mind—not even a mote of dust. An accomplished yogi perceives everything as the continuity of pure wakefulness; the entire external world is a celestial palace and the inhabitants, sentient beings, have the nature of *dakas* and *dakinis*.

Our immediate perception is simply distorted. When the distortion is cleared, everything within one's personal experience is seen as purity. Ordinary beings cannot perceive this purity, but by becoming an accomplished yogi yourself, you will see this basic purity. This is the difference between personal perception and the perception of others: you can see other beings as pure because they are already pure; but due to their obscurations, they themselves don't perceive this purity. For an accomplished yogi, everything within and without is the purity of enlightened body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities, and such a yogi perceives the great equality of samsara and nirvana.

Enlightenment is like awakening from sleep. Conceptual thinking creates all the perceptions and phenomena of daily life, just as

whatever you experience at night is created by sleep. Awakening from sleep, the dream disappears. Nothing remains of this present confusion when the distorted experience and confusion of conceptual thinking are completely cleared away. The manifestations of phenomena are merely the display of rainbow light. When there is no manifestation, there is just the space of primordial purity.

The mundane experience of phenomena is called distorted perception, the confused perception of sentient beings. In the experience of someone who has pure perception, a house will be a celestial palace. In the celestial palace, there is no experience of earth, water, fire, or wind. Everything is rainbow light. How amazing! The houses are houses of rainbow light. You cannot say they do not exist, because they have manifest qualities. You cannot say they do exist, because there is no sense of concrete earth, fire, water, or wind. This reveals their primordial nonexistence.

Awareness must return to the inner space. Having gotten lost in the progressive straying into samsara, rigpa must retrace its steps and return to primordial purity. The dualistic phenomena of worlds and beings possess not even the tip of a hair's worth of concrete existence. Primordial purity has no concreteness. All the phenomena of samsara and nirvana manifest from the space of primordial purity. The various phenomena of the waking state are all perceived within the framework of conceptual thinking. When you are grounded in wakeful knowing free from concepts, samsaric phenomena are like a movie projector that has fallen apart. You can create the Third World War in a film, but when the movie stops, so does the war.

Various signs will happen when we apply the teachings to our own situation, and it is good to discern the true signs of progress in practice. For example, having meditated upon a *yidam* deity, one should have a vision of it. There are also general signs of the completion stage such as seeing lights, smoke, a mirage, and so forth. We can actually perceive these signs of blessings with our eyes.

Then there are also the meditation experiences known as *nyam*, which are neither actual nor dreamlike, but somewhere in between. We can have experiences of bliss or emptiness. We might think, "Today my awareness is really amazing, naked and unchanging, free from duality, free from attachment to the experiences of bliss, clarity, and nonthought. What incredible awareness!" Such a feeling is just a passing experience, but it is a sign of practice nonetheless.

Not all signs of practice are good ones; some are good, and some are bad. Sometimes we find it impossible to meditate, very difficult to sit; we feel depressed or angry—such states belong to the unpleasant experiences. These two kinds of experience, pleasant and unpleasant, are both signs of practice. But no matter what happens, all these experiences are merely clouds within the sky of primordial purity. Sometimes the sky is clouded; sometimes it is cloudless. Whether the sun shines from a cloudless sky adorned with rainbows, whether it rains, storms, or snows, these are all mere experiences.

However, among the signs of practice, there are two stages: experience and realization. The true sign of practice is that your mind is free from clinging, naturally and without any difficulty. Another good sign, and one of the important achievements, is when your mind feels at such ease that it is full of devotion, faith, and compassion, like the sky suffused with the warmth of sunlight. However the real accomplishment is to remain unaffected by the experiences of bliss, clarity, and nonthought, while being free from the two hindrances to meditation: dullness and agitation. Dullness means to not really know whether your awareness is clear; in fact, your awareness is obscured. There are three types of dullness: feeling dull, drowsy, or obscured. There are also three types of agitation: feeling scattered, agitated, or absentminded.

In short, even the slightest clinging can harm our practice. Cutting through thoughts should be automatic, but if we don't notice that we are obscured and instead become oblivious, or if we become agitated, the mind finds it impossible to be quiet and we feel we cannot cut

through thoughts. Once free from dullness and agitation, the view is unobscured. How long awareness lasts depends on how accustomed we have become to it.

The perfect method for becoming quickly accustomed to the unfabricated state of awareness is to have devotion to enlightened beings and compassion for unenlightened beings. Then, as it is said, "in the moment of love, the empty essence dawns nakedly."<sup>2</sup> Devotion and compassion are both love. Body, speech, and mind can feel overwhelmed with love, and if you then look inwardly, it is like a sun unobscured by clouds. This is how past Kagyü and Nyingma practitioners could attain enlightenment without being learned. With little theoretical understanding, they were able to gain experience, the great adornment of awareness. This experience should be without dualistic clinging since experience with clinging has no benefit.

Swift attainment of enlightenment depends on trust and devotion toward the Three Jewels, and compassion toward our mother sentient beings. The nature of emptiness can nakedly manifest when we have these. This is the supreme path of unity devoid of errors.

Buddhism's special quality is unity untainted by the two extremes of eternalism and nihilism. A fall into either of these views is a limitation that will impede progress on the correct path. Taking the view of unity—that the nature of mind is both empty and cognizant—the cognizance clears away the extreme of nihilism and the emptiness clears away the extreme of eternalism. This unity is empty cognizance suffused with knowing. Without this unity, one person will say that mind is eternal; another will claim that it is void. Straying into such errors, the externalist and nihilist views create the dualistic experience of a perceiver and an object perceived.

Devotion and compassion are the greatest techniques, the most eminent means. They are a hundred times better than meditating on deities

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2. A quotation from the famous *Mahamudra Aspiration* by the third Karmapa.

and reciting mantras. In the Great Perfection teachings, we generally say that only unfabricated, natural compassion and devotion are important, but we must begin by contriving trust and compassion.

Though devotion and compassion are already present within awareness, your own essence, in the beginning you need to fabricate feelings of devotion and compassion because natural, unfabricated devotion or uncontrived compassion do not unfold immediately. However, as you become increasingly stable in awareness, you will naturally feel compassion toward all beings, thinking, "Sentient beings are unaware of this most precious nature, which is like buddhahood in the palm of one's hand!"

Devotion is accompanied by thoughts like "How fantastic to be able to cut through the very base and root of confusion. It is incredible, this perfection of all virtues, this exhaustion of all faults. Nothing is superior to this awareness!" Thus you gain trust.

If we know how to do so, then simply meditating on emptiness is completely sufficient unto itself; but if you haven't truly recognized the correct emptiness, then only through compassion can you be guided to emptiness. For the best result you need both emptiness and compassion, which is called *emptiness suffused with compassion*.

True devotion and compassion are like the summer warmth that melts the ice of winter. Looking into the essence of devotion, you meet naked awareness directly. That is why devotion is so precious and important.

Emptiness without compassion is never taught to be the true path of enlightenment. Water will always be wet. Without understanding emptiness, not a single sentient being will attain enlightenment. Once you truly realize emptiness, you will naturally have compassion and think, "How wonderful it would be if all sentient beings could realize this!"

*Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche*  
*from his collected oral teachings*

*Treasures from  
Juniper Ridge*





## *Advice on How to Practice the Profound Instructions*

The master gave the king this advice:

Your Majesty, practice the meaning of these instructions.

There is no ease within samsara's realms;

Ease is found in the awakened state.

Through effort this awakened state is never gained;

It is not achieved with effort, but by letting be and never  
striving.

By rejection, samsara is not left behind;

It is freed within itself by letting be.

Your attempts to cure your miseries have brought no ease;

You are at ease by loosely letting be.

You find no happiness from craving;

Only when you have let go of craving.

Attachment is not cut by trying to avoid it;

Only by revulsion is it truly stopped.

Instructions are not found by wanting;

You can gain them when you find a master.

You never receive blessings just from asking;

They come when you have gained devotion.

King, you will find happiness when the Dharma is your regular companion.

Give up distracting occupations and embrace the nature of the view and meditation.

Remain in dharmakaya's equal state that is beyond arising.

The king was delighted, and he saluted and circumambulated the master with deep faith and respect.

# *Self-Liberated Wakefulness*

## DIRECT INSTRUCTIONS IN MAHAMUDRA

Homage to the Lotus-Born of Uddiyana.

HERE ARE THE ORAL INSTRUCTIONS IN MAHAMUDRA.

The master of Uddiyana said: Listen, Tsogyal. When teaching the direct instructions of Mahamudra there are four points: the Mahamudra of the view, the Mahamudra of the meditation, the Mahamudra of the fruition, and the Mahamudra of the training.

First, for the Mahamudra of the view, a tantra says:

The Mahamudra of the view is the basic nature of the  
mind,  
With nothing to prove or dispel.

In this way, Mahamudra has no support, no reference point, is by nature unborn, and does not perish through circumstances. Its play is unconfined and is the natural state, the basic nature of all that can be known.

Moreover, its virtues need not be produced nor are there flaws to be eliminated, like the analogy of believing a rope to be a snake. It is the notion of the snake that is mistaken and not the rope; though upon first glance it appeared to be a snake, you realize that it was just a rope. Neither does the rope need to be proved nor the snake need to be

dispelled, not even in the slightest. In the same way, the basic nature of all things that can be known is itself the nature of Mahamudra. So neither is there a need to produce thought-free wakefulness nor does thinking need to be eliminated. Thought-free wakefulness is directly present while thinking, and so—belonging to no category such as permanence or nothingness, the two types of identity, or to the perceiver or the perceived—it is known as original and perfect purity.

Second, about the Mahamudra of the meditation, a tantra says:

Let your basic nature settle without clinging;  
That is the Mahamudra of the meditation state.

In this way, the Mahamudra of the meditation is to allow your original nature to let be without holding anything whatsoever in mind. So, it is not the result of thought, not indicated, not something that is or is not; it is without conflict and mental doing, and does not exclude anything whatsoever.

Moreover, by letting be in naturalness, there is no need to modify with a remedy, just like the ocean and the waves. When a wave moves on the great ocean, it rises from and subsides back into the ocean. The wave is no other than the ocean, and the ocean is no other than the wave. Like the wave in the ocean, remain serenely as equal taste. Like this analogy, within the Mahamudra of your mind-essence, the original nature free of thought, let be completely in naturalness. Do not hold anything in mind. Whatever thought may arise is, at the very moment of arising, not separate from thought-free and unmistakable wakefulness. Thought arises from you, appears to you, and dissolves into you. At that moment, the natural state is not a thing you can think of, nor is it possible to indicate it through words.

Being devoid of the duality of perceiver and perceived, it is not something that is. Since this nondual wakefulness experiences in every possible way, it is not something that is not. And since these two levels of reality are indivisible, it is without conflict.

Since all the mistaken phenomena are stamped with its seal, it is not excluding anything. And thus, being originally free, it is known as the original state of self-liberation.

Third, for the Mahamudra of the fruition, a tantra says:

The ground itself matured into the fruit,  
That is the Mahamudra of the fruition.

In this way, the Mahamudra of the fruition is when the basic nature, the natural state of all knowable things, has matured into realization. In other words, its essence, *dharmakaya*, is concurrent with emptiness; its nature, *sambhogakaya*, is endowed with the skillful means of lucid wakefulness; and its capacity, *nirmanakaya*, is its unconfined, natural expression.

To use an analogy, when a seed has matured into an ear of grain, it is only the seed that developed into the ear of grain. There is no ear of grain apart from the seed, and besides the ear of grain, there is nothing into which the seed can ripen. Just like that analogy, fruition is your original mind, the naturally pure, basic state—after its myriad types of temporary modulations have subsided into itself. It is simply the natural state as it is.

It is your mind's empty essence, an unconfined state of wakefulness, that is *dharmakaya*. It is your mind's lucid nature, experience impossible for words to describe, that is *sambhogakaya*. It is your mind's expressive capacity, the self-liberation of every moment of experience, that is *nirmanakaya*.

Fourth, for the Mahamudra of the training, a tantra says:

In order to bring forth sequential blessings,  
There is the Mahamudra of the training.

You must request the oral instructions from a master who possesses transmission, realization, and compassion. From that day onwards, you must supplicate him, regarding him not as a form-body (*rupa-*

*kaya*) but only as dharmakaya. Unable to bear any separation, dissolve into him with deep yearning, so that through the master's blessings the realization of Mahamudra arises spontaneously. This—the singularly sufficient shortcut with no need to depend upon any other method among the two stages—is known as the Mahamudra of the training.

To use an analogy, when the sun is bright and you have an undamaged, untainted lens, dry moss will catch fire the very moment you correctly arrange the three. Similarly, when the master's blessings, your own devotion, and the pure sincerity of your being all coincide, the original wakefulness that is Mahamudra automatically arises by simply making a supplication with deepfelt yearning.

Now for the method to ensure that your being is purified. After receiving the oral instructions, initially go to a secluded place and remain there in solitude. Then, casting away all other aims—completely surrendering—repeatedly form this frame of mind: “What a terrible waste it would be if I were to squander away this body of freedoms and riches, obtained just this once! As nothing is certain, what would I do if I were to die tonight or right now! My mind has not attained any stability. And after I die, nothing and no one will accompany me!”

Then take refuge and form the *bodhichitta* resolve many times. Use various methods to purify your obscurations and to gather the accumulations. But in particular, visualize your personal root guru in the center of your heart, thinking, “He alone is Mahamudra, the dharmakaya buddha!” Supplicate him with intense sincerity, until you are exhausted. Then, your consciousness will become a thought-free and empty state, an experience of indescribable clarity or a state of bliss free of attachment. Recognize, “This alone is the guru's mind, my own mind, the Mahamudra of dharmakaya!” and let be in the spontaneous freedom of the basic state of naturalness.

At first, train in short sessions repeated many times, and through this your thinking will evaporate like mist. Then extend the sessions,

and by doing so remain completely thought-free. Finally, transcending sessions and breaks, you will expand into a state in which everything is the single nature of *dharmata*.

During your breaks, carry out all your daily activities within a continuous and pervasive state of lucid wakefulness, free from any mental doing. But, even though this natural state is now an actuality for you, continue to cultivate a vast compassion for sentient beings and make aspirations that the well-being of others may be spontaneously accomplished in the manner of nonaction.

This was but a fragment teaching “Self-Liberated Wakefulness: the direct instructions of Mahamudra.”

SAMAYA. ॐ SEAL, SEAL, SEAL. ॐ

*This wonderful and ultimate instruction, a rediscovered terma of Drimey Kunga, was revealed as a siddhi by Pema Ösel Do-Ngak Lingpa at Upright Shank of Red Rock, after which it was given to Orgyen Chimey Tennyi Yungdrung Lingpa. May it cause the true lineage of realization to spread and flourish as far as space pervades.<sup>3</sup>*

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3. Pema Ösel Do-Ngak Lingpa is the tertön name of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo and Orgyen Chimey Tennyi Yungdrung Lingpa is the tertön name of Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye.





## *The Twenty-one Vital Instructions*

The master of Uddiyana known by the name Padmasambhava is an emanation of Buddha Amitabha, miraculously born from a lotus flower on an ocean isle. Having interrupted birth and death, he remains in his bodily form beyond passing and transmigration. His voice teaches the nine vehicles, including all the causal and resultant teachings. His mind, endowed with omniscient wisdom, comprehends the vital points of all dharmas.

Lady Tsogyal, the Princess of Kharchen, asked this master: I fail to understand the key points of the outer and inner teachings, the 84,000 Dharma doors, and the higher and lower vehicles, so please bestow upon me the vital instructions.

She had not only pleased her master in thought, word, and deed, but she also accompanied this request with an offering of a golden mandala bedecked with turquoise resembling the seven precious possessions.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Which vital point contains all that appears and exists?

The master replied: Space is the vital point that contains all that appears and exists. The four elements are all changing and impermanent; but, from the very beginning, the nature of space is empty and unchanging. The four elements—earth, water, fire, and wind—have

a fleeting nature. When they appear, they appear within the expanse of space; while they remain, they remain within the expanse of space; and when they dissolve, they dissolve within that same expanse. Since the nature of space is unchanging throughout the three times, all that appears and exists can be condensed into space.

While space is the example, the meaning is dharmata, which like space is empty since the primordial beginning. And the sign is that within the sky-like empty mind, habitual tendencies and disturbing emotions are just like clouds and mist. When they appear, they appear within empty mind; when they remain, they remain within the expanse of empty mind; and when they dissolve, they dissolve within that same expanse of empty mind.

When you realize that this is the way it is, to be untainted by the flaws of habitual tendencies for karmic deeds and disturbing emotions is known as having brought together all that appears and exists within a single vital point.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Which vital point contains the 84,000 Dharma doors?

The master replied: Dharmata's great ease is the vital point that contains the 84,000 Dharma doors. Other dharmas change and do not last. Dharmata's great ease is spontaneously present since the beginning, free of deliberate striving, an uncontrived state, a self-existing natural presence, and it remains an unconstructed expanse.

When the 84,000 Dharma doors of the other vehicles appear, they appear within the expanse of dharmata's great ease; when they remain, they remain within dharmata's expanse of great ease; and when they dissolve, they dissolve again within dharmata's expanse of great ease. No matter how dharmas may change, no matter what words are used to express them, and no matter how the learned may explain them, the nature of dharmata's great ease remains unchanged.

Therefore, the vital point of all dharmas is to settle evenly, without striving, within dharmata's great ease. That is the vital point of the 84,000 Dharma doors.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Which vital point contains every sentient being?

The master replied: Awakened mind is the vital point that contains every sentient being. Every physical form and state of mind changes and is impermanent. Sentient beings in the four modes of rebirth first appear because of failing to realize their minds; next, they remain due to not realizing their minds; when they continue to circle, sentient beings spin in samsara due to not realizing their minds.

When they simply recognize the never-arising mind, a self-existing knowing that is primordially pure, they have found the Awakened One within themselves. The moment they realize the nature of this mind and settle evenly, without striving for the mind, they have awakened within this expanse.

Since awakened mind is essentially unchanging throughout the three times, all sentient beings are the awakened state of a buddha. And since this buddha, the *sugata*-essence, is present in a way that pervades everyone, it is of vital importance to realize this awakened state. To realize it is known as having brought together all sentient beings within a single vital point.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Which vital point contains every type of wisdom?

The master replied: Self-existing wakefulness is the vital point of every type of wisdom. Other wisdoms change and do not last. Self-existing wakefulness, naturally present since the primordial beginning, is the nature of dharmata, an unlimited self-knowing. To this

self-existing wakefulness nothing remains unknown, nothing remains unseen, nothing remains unrealized. Since this self-existing wakefulness is awake and unfathomable in essence, it is also the basis for every *dharma* and wisdom.<sup>4</sup> It is also their abode and is therefore known as the vital point that contains every type of wisdom.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Which vital point contains every type of *samadhi*?

The master replied: The *samadhi* of suchness is the vital point of all *samadhis*. Other *samadhis* change and do not last. The *samadhi* of suchness is *dharmata*, your true identity. It is the unmistakable, original nature as it is, the uncontrived, true identity. Simply to be this nature, the emptiness of the *samadhi* of suchness includes every other type of *samadhi*, without exception, as they are contained within this very state. Every possible type of *dharma* and every aspect of the awakened state, as countless as they may be, are, without exception, contained in the nonstriving state of original emptiness, as it is. It is therefore known as having brought together all *samadhis* within a single vital point.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Which vital point contains all abodes?

The master replied: Unchanging *dharmadhatu* is the vital point of all abodes. All other abodes perish. For sentient beings who fail to realize the unchanging nature of *dharmata*, their abodes, times, life spans, circumstances, actions, and thoughts all change, while *dharmata* remains unchanged by any circumstance or emotion. Unlike the exquisite abodes of buddhafields or the awful abodes of samsaric beings, the unchanging nature of *dharmata* is subject to neither good nor bad

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4. The word *dharma*, though it has many connotations, refers here to truth or teaching.

concepts. It is unchanging by letting be, without artifice or striving—that is the dharmadhatu abode. To realize its nature is known as having brought together all abodes within a single vital point.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Which vital point contains all paths?

The master replied: The path beyond journey is the vital point that contains all paths. All other paths change and do not last. The path of awakened mind is beyond journey in the sense that awakened mind essentially is your true nature, unmistakable basic space, the nondual nature of lucid wakefulness. So, when you realize how to embark upon it, there is neither a path to traverse nor a journey. The moment you realize this nature that transcends coming and going, there is no basis for a concrete path through which you could be conveyed by a vehicle. And, being uncreated, it is known as the indestructible, vajra-like awakened state. To realize this nature is known as having brought together all paths within a single vital point.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Which vital point contains all *kayas*?

The master replied: The unchanging dharmakaya is the vital point of all kayas. All other kayas change and do not last. Dharmakaya remains untainted by the shortcomings of substance and attributes. It does not change as this unmanifest form is indestructible in all circumstances. The kayas labeled by thought, such as the sambhogakayas and nirmanakayas, all change. The word *kaya* is defined as indestructible, because of remaining unchanged by any circumstance. To understand and realize this nature is known as having brought together all kayas within a single vital point.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Which vital point contains all voices?

The master replied: The voice of the insubstantial nature is the vital point that contains all voices. Other voices change and do not last; the voices of sentient beings appear in sound and then cease. Once you realize the insubstantial nature of dharmata, you understand that all beings' voices are devoid of concrete substance as well. Sounds are audible emptiness, empty of identity. They occur unhindered from the empty nature because this self-existing nature is insubstantial. To understand and realize this nature is known as having brought together all voices within a single vital point.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Which vital point contains all states of mind?

The master replied: Equality free of confusion is the vital point that contains all states of mind. Other states of mind change and do not last. The mind of the buddhas is undeluded and uncontrived; it is an unconfined equality for which the flaws of confusion have been cleared away and the wakefulness of knowing has unfolded.<sup>5</sup> The state of mind of a sentient being fails to realize itself, and the superficial, illusory phenomena of involvements in the general vehicles are all delusion. Awakened mind—unmistaken and uncontrived, free from the confines of effort and striving—contains every state of mind of the buddhas. To understand and realize this nature is known as having brought together all states of mind within a single vital point.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Which vital point contains all *samayas*?

The master replied: Pervasiveness is the vital point that contains all *samayas* since it is timelessly beyond keeping. Other *samayas* change

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5. "Cleared" and "unfolded" are a play on the two components of the Tibetan word for buddha (*sang-gye*).

and do not last. Awakened mind is free from flaws and obscurations, and therefore pure and clear. Being free of virtuous objects to be accepted and flawed objects to be rejected, awakened mind consists neither of something to keep nor the act of keeping. Since there is no wavering within such a nature, not to part from its realized state is known as pervasiveness that transcends keeping a samaya. The countless millions of general samayas can be breached and therefore bind you tightly to upholding them. To understand and realize this nature is known as having brought together all samayas within a single vital point.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Which vital point contains all virtues?

The master replied: A state of total equipoise is the vital point that contains all virtues. Every other virtue changes and does not last. As for the virtues of awakened mind, all spiritual virtues stem from mind. When your mind is pliable, you are in charge of whatever you may desire. It is just like the wish-fulfilling gem that is the source of bestowing all needs and wants. In contrast, the minor virtues of distorted learning are not like total equipoise and do not yield perfection. The attainment and stability of a pliable mind gives you total equipoise in the perfection of enlightened virtues. To understand and realize this nature is known as having brought together all virtues within a single vital point.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Which vital point contains all activities?

The master replied: Spontaneous fulfillment beyond striving is the vital point that contains all activities. All other activities change and do not last. Since the beginning, your self-knowing mind has been an unfabricated spontaneous presence; so, since its aim is already fulfilled, henceforth it is not something that an activity can accomplish with effort and striving. Everyone engaged in the teachings of cause and

effect believes in achieving an awakened state that results from effort and striving; but this vital activity is like the statement “All deeds are fulfilled by settling without striving. Free of striving, the dharmakaya is attained.” To understand and realize this nature is known as having brought together all activities within a single vital point.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Which vital point contains all aspects of Secret Mantra?

The master replied: The Secret Mantra of the ultimate essence is the vital point that contains all aspects of Secret Mantra. Every other aspect of Mantra changes and does not last. Knowing this is the essence of Secret Mantra. However, even though the empty nature of this knowing is present in everyone, it remains a secret because it is hard for it to be realized by everyone. The identity of this Secret Mantra of the ultimate essence is ineffable and unfabricated since the beginning, and therefore remains a secret.

It is the Secret Mantra of the ultimate essence because this essence, revealed through the ultimate instruction, is the cause for attaining buddhahood. To expect to attain buddhahood through the laborious striving in cultivation of a deity and recitation of mantra is to bind the Buddha by craving. The belief that realization of this nature can be gained by effort is like the statement “Attaining does not gain the buddhas’ state, since one is bound by trying to attain.” Therefore, when you understand it to be spontaneously present within you, the awakened state of a buddha is not an object to be achieved. To understand and realize this nature is known as having brought together all attainments into a single vital point.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Which vital point contains all aspirations?



The master replied: The absence of hope and fear is the vital point that contains all aspirations. All other aspirations change and do not last. In other words, to abide by and engage in the vehicles of the general perspectives is to keep a dualistic view of hope and fear. Aspiration in the *vajra* vehicle of Secret Mantra transcends the duality of hope and fear, like the flight path of a bird.<sup>6</sup> This is like the statement “The perfect path is entered without traveling the fivefold path. The buddha path is traversed without wishing.” The moment you merely recognize the unmistakable state of awakened mind, the dharmadhatu that by nature is spontaneously present, you neither hope to attain buddhahood nor fear falling into samsara. In this way, wishes are fundamentally cleared away and paths are fundamentally beyond traversing. To understand and realize this nature is known as having brought together all aspirations within a single vital point.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Which vital point contains all meditation trainings?<sup>7</sup>

The master replied: The flow of uncontrived nonmeditation is the vital point that contains all meditation trainings. All other trainings change and do not last.

Train, untrained, in a thought-free state.

Let training be in artlessness.

There is no reason here to train.

There is no meditator either.

The vital point of truly training

Is to realize this total absence.

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6. The flight path of a bird is the trail a bird leaves behind as it flies: there is nothing to see.

7. The Tibetan word *gom*, which is usually translated as “meditating,” carries the meaning of cultivating, growing used to, familiarizing, and training. Here, “meditation trainings” is used to cover both connotations.

The meditation with effort of the general vehicles is taught to be bound up with concepts of struggle and gain and therefore does not bring freedom. So, to understand this nonmeditation of natural presence is known as having brought together all meditation trainings within a single vital point.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Which vital point contains every type of conduct?

The master replied: Nonaction is the vital point that contains all types of conduct.<sup>8</sup> All other types of conduct change and do not last. Let actions be while free of effort; then all deeds are accomplished. To follow thoughts and tendencies is to be involved in the dharmas of cause and effect, the general vehicles of sentient beings.

Well, what then does nonaction mean? The conduct that is uninvolved in the duality of hope and fear is such that, no matter what dharmas you engage in, by letting be in the equanimity of nonstriving you are free from deliberate and attached yearning. By letting be in the nature of effortless equanimity, no matter what you perceive or think of, it is the conduct of all buddhas. To understand and realize this is known as having brought together all types of conduct within a single vital point.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Which vital point contains all types of fruition?

The master replied: The true and complete buddhahood is the vital point that contains every type of fruition. All other results change and do not last. True and complete buddhahood is freed from the limits

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8. The Tibetan word *chōpa* can be translated as “practice,” “conduct,” “action,” or “doing,” as well as “to enjoy,” “partake of,” or “engage in.”

of permanence and nothingness. Transcending all types of concrete objects, it is unchanging and neither arises nor ceases. Transcending dimensions, it is like this statement:

Dharmakaya is, itself, a perfect purity,  
 A personal experience, the undivided, basic nature.  
 This knowing, tranquil as dharmata's state,  
 The supreme fruition, that transcends every attainment,  
 Springs from you and within you is attained.

Conversely, it is not taught here that freedom is reached by believing, as in the general vehicles, that the fruition of buddhahood is achieved some other place. To understand and realize this nature is known as having brought together all types of fruition within a single vital point.



To benefit future generations, I, Tsogyal, concealed these twenty-one vital instructions that condense the realization of all buddhas.<sup>9</sup> It will weaken his attainment if the worthy person of karmic destiny widely propagates them right after receiving them. So hide the fact that they are terma treasures, and only propagate them gradually. This completes "The Twenty-one Vital Instructions."

SEAL OF TREASURE. ‡

SEAL OF CONCEALMENT. ‡

SEAL OF ENTRUSTMENT. ‡

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9. The title of this chapter is "Twenty-one Vital Instructions" but, unfortunate as it may be, the various source texts only contain replies to eighteen questions. The remaining three questions are either contained within the others, or they must have gotten lost over the centuries of copying the manuscripts by hand.



## *The Pointing-Out Instruction to the Old Lady*

When the nirmanakaya, Master Padmasambhava, was invited by King Trisong Deutsen and was residing in Glorious Samye at Red Rock, the virtuous Lady of Tön, a woman of extraordinary devotion, sent her attendant the Lady of Margong by the name Rinchen Tso to offer a morning meal of curd with slices of grapes.

Later, when the master was on his way to Samye Chimphu, just as he was passing through the gate, the Lady of Tön bowed down on the road and circumambulated him, joined her palms before him, and said: Please, great master. You are about to leave, and this old lady is about to die.

First of all, since I was born as a girl, I am of an inferior birth. Having been distracted by activities, I forgot the Dharma. Second, being of lesser intelligence, my wits are feeble. Third, I feel obscured due to my advanced age and my mind is unclear.

Please, great master, bestow upon this old woman an instruction that requires little hardship, that is simple to grasp, easy to apply, and very effective. Please give an instruction for an old woman who will die soon.

The master replied: Old lady, who are you?

The old woman responded: I am the one who has been sending a bowl of curd with a lowly maid.

The master joyfully said: You are surely one who has greater devotion than Trisong Deutsen.

Then he instructed the old lady and her attendant with these words: Old woman, take the cross-legged position and keep your body upright. For a short while, simply remain with totally relaxed attention.

The master pointed his finger to the old lady's heart and gave this instruction: Old woman, listen to me. If you are asked what the difference is between the mind of the truly perfected Buddha and the mind of sentient beings of the three realms, it is nothing other than the difference between realizing and not realizing the nature of mind.

Since sentient beings fail to realize this nature, delusion occurs and from this ignorance the myriad types of sufferings come to pass. Thus beings roam through samsara. The basic material of buddhahood is in them, but they fail to recognize it.

First of all, the basic material of buddhahood is within you. In particular, it is in the human beings who have obtained the freedoms and riches. Moreover, it is not such that the basic material for buddhahood is abundant in men and deficient in women. Thus, even though you have taken rebirth as a woman, you are not prevented from attaining buddhahood.

The 84,000 Dharma doors have been taught in order to recognize and realize the wisdom mind of the buddhas, but this understanding is contained in a master's three words of instruction. Thus, even though you may be of inferior intelligence and feeble wits, you are not disadvantaged.

Now, the meaning of the Dharma, the buddha-mind, and the master's three words of instruction is this: By purifying externally perceived objects, your perceptions are freed in themselves. By purifying the perceiving mind within, your nonclinging awareness is freed in itself. As the lucid wakefulness between is delightful, you recognize your own nature.

How are the perceived objects outside purified? This present awareness, the awakened state of mind, is unspoiled by thought and perceives as a natural brightness. Let it be like that, and objects are perceived without being clung to. In this way, no matter how appearances appear, they are in fact not real and are not held to be actual things. Thus, no matter what you perceive, be it the earth or rocks, mountains or cliffs, plants or trees, houses or castles, goods or utensils, friends or foes, family members or companions, husband or wife, sons or daughters—towards all these and all other things—you are uninvolved in the attitude of claiming ownership; and so, they are perceived but not held to be that way. By being free of clinging to anything whatsoever, you are purified of objects perceived externally.

Objects being purified does not mean that you stop perceiving. It means not to hold and cling while being bright and empty. Like the example of reflections in a mirror, they appear but are empty in that there is nothing to grasp, and your perceptions are known as *perceptions occurring to yourself*.

By means of the inner perceiving mind being purified, here is the instruction in liberating nonclinging awareness in itself: No matter what occurs in your mind—the flow of thoughts, memories, or the five poisonous emotions—when you do not focus upon them, the movement vanishes by itself; thus you are untainted by the faults of thinking.

To be flawless within does not mean to become an inert stone. It means that your awareness remains free of the flaws of thinking, like the example of having gone to an island of precious gold; on this golden island, not even the name “stone” exists. Likewise, once your thinking dissolves into original wakefulness, there is not even the name “thought.”

As the lucid wakefulness between is delightful, here is the instruction in recognizing your own nature: While practicing, free from unknowing, your own consciousness is clear, pure, and awake. When

practicing, you have the experience that your innate, self-existing wakefulness is neither spoiled by a conceptual attitude nor by clinging to bliss, clarity, or nonthought. As that itself is the buddha-mind, you have recognized your own nature.

It is like the example of not needing to imagine your mother to be your mother, as you have no fear due to thinking that she is not your mother. Similarly, when your awareness recognizes that it is the innate nature of dharmata, you will no longer mistakenly imagine that the phenomena of samsara are the innate nature—even without knowing it, you were never apart from this innate nature of dharmata.

As this is known as the unfabricated training, the dharmata mother is the fact that all phenomena are devoid of self-nature; the dharmata abode is the recognition that they are devoid of self-nature; and *knowing your own nature by yourself* is so called since you recognize that your own awareness is the innate space of dharmadhatu.

When you have recognized this, there is neither superior nor inferior birth, neither higher nor lower activities, neither sharper nor weaker intellect, neither greater nor lesser intelligence, neither vast nor narrow learning, neither high nor low age, neither clear nor unclear mind.

This is an instruction of little hardship but simple to grasp, easy to apply but very effective, with which you will have no dread at the time of death. Old lady, practice it! Be diligent, as life does not wait! You get no reward from slaving for husband and child, so do not return empty-handed, but take along the provisions of your master's instructions! The tasks of this life are endless; so reach perfection in meditation practice!

Old lady, keep this advice as your escort for being fearless at the time of death!

Thus he spoke. Since the master gave this instruction while pointing his finger at the old woman's heart, it is known as "*The Pointing-*



*Out Instruction to the Old Lady.*" Upon hearing it, the old lady and her attendant were both liberated and attained accomplishment.

Lady Tsogyal of Kharchen committed it to writing for the benefit of future generations. It was written down on the southern slope of Samye on the seventeenth day of the second summer month in the Year of the Hare.

Concealed as terma treasure for the sake of future  
generations,  
May it meet with a worthy emanation!  
May it instruct beings in appropriate ways!  
Through this, may the destined ones liberate their stream-  
of-being!

SEAL, SEAL, SEAL. ॐ



## *Descending with the View from Above*

NAMO GHURU.

The master Padmasambhava, whose realization is equal to the truly and completely awakened Samantabhadra, who possessed in his mind all the teachings on the view and meditation and never strayed from the true meaning, was asked by Lady Tsogyal of Kharchen, about all the key points for resolving the realization of descending with the view from above.

The Lady of Kharchen asked the Lotus Master: From where do all that appears and exists, the phenomena of samsara and nirvana, first arise?

The master replied: All that appears and exists, the phenomena of samsara and nirvana, arise from the solidified habitual tendencies of labeling. There are three types of labeling: mental labels, cognitive labels, and verbalized labels. Mental labels make thoughts move; cognitive labels build up habitual tendencies; and verbalized labels manifest the manifold objects. It would therefore be better if you stop labeling.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: How does one become free from attaching labels?

The master replied: When you are free from the thought activity of mental labeling, you will be free from the cognitive labels “good” and “evil.” And when free from that, you will also be free from attaching

the names of verbalized labeling. By being free from the multitude of dream habits, you are free from labeling names. By being free from that, you will be free from the label “*bardo*,” and free from that, you will be free from the label “birth and death.” By being free from these, you will have stopped the stream of samsaric rebirths.

All phenomena are names labeled by thoughts. These names are not real so it would be better to be free from labeling.



The Lady asked: What is the way to be free from labeling?

The master replied: The phenomena of samsara and nirvana—even though, when labeled and conceptualized, they may appear as enjoyable or offensive; pleasant or painful; as me, myself, and others; and so forth—all naturally dissolve when you neither alter their names nor attach any labels but leave them in their natural state.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: What is the meeting point beyond both buddhas and sentient beings?

The master replied: When there are neither buddhas nor sentient beings,<sup>10</sup> [the natural state] is beyond knowing and unknowing, beyond realization and lack of realization, beyond real and unreal, good and evil, and thus free from all types of labeling.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: How are sentient beings then deluded into this labeling?

The master replied: The ego arises from that in which there is nothing to label. As this habitual tendency to ego-belief solidifies, names

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10. This refers to the primordial time before there were buddhas through realization and sentient beings due to failing to realize the nature of mind.

are formed such as “father” and “mother,” “child” and “possessions,” “enemy” and “friend,” “objects of the senses” and so forth. In this way ego-belief and labeling delude you into the six realms.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: How does one then attain enlightenment?

The master replied:

You are not enlightened through fabricated dharmas;  
You need a *dharma* beyond fabrication.

You are not enlightened through indicated dharmas;  
You need a dharma beyond indication.

You are not enlightened through explained dharmas;  
You need a dharma beyond explanation.

You are not enlightened through cultivated dharmas;  
You need a dharma beyond cultivation.

Don't do anything. Don't go anywhere.

Don't think. Don't construct.

Don't judge. Don't focus.

Don't support. Don't take aim. Don't cling.

Without anything whatsoever, simply remain.<sup>11</sup>

Don't even label this “Buddha.”

Dharmakaya is beyond thought, word, and description.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Isn't this the nature of nonaction?

The master replied:

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11. The *Lama Gongdü* version here reads: “Without anything whatsoever, remain in the way it naturally is.”

While in itself it is no thing whatsoever,  
 Its experience is that any perception takes place.  
 While it is no concrete thing whatsoever,  
 It serves as the basis for all myriad things.  
 While there is not even an atom to indicate it,  
 It serves as the expression for all indications.<sup>12</sup>  
 While it holds no attachment or clinging,  
 It is the foundation for everything.  
 While it is free from all birth and death,  
 It serves as the basis for sickness, aging, and death.

Don't fabricate it. Don't modify it.  
 Remain free from mental constructs  
 As primordial openness, your original state.  
 Samsara and nirvana dissolve where they are.  
 Your innermost enemy, ego-belief, naturally subsides.  
 The portent of dread has changed into auspiciousness.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Is mind the basis for faults?

The master replied:

Lack of realization is the basis for faults.  
 Realize the nature of mind to be empty in essence.  
 Within this vast and empty dharmakaya,  
 No defilement of faults can live.  
 Thus, the buddhas of the three times  
 Awaken by realizing the nature of mind.

Firmly resolve that faults have no inherent basis.

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12. The *Lama Gongdü* version here reads: "It serves as the root of all indications." The difference in Tibetan is small: "Root" is spelled *rtsa* while expression is spelled *rtsal*.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Are objects and mind a duality?

The master replied:

The objects seen are mind's display.

The many displays are the play of your mind.

And while they are all empty in essence,

The objects you see can dissolve and need not be rejected.

Firmly resolve that objects and mind are not two.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Should buddhahood be achieved in some other place?

The master replied:

All the buddhas dwelling in the triple times

Realized their minds to be beyond arising.

From this state of nonarising, their play appeared as  
threefold kayas

And cannot be achieved apart from that.

Firmly resolve on that.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: What is the confidence free from dread of change and transmigration?

The master replied: Change and transmigration are labels created by worldly people. When you have perfected the power of self-knowing and always remain in the unchanging state of great equality, you can firmly resolve that there is fundamentally no change and transmigration.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Where do we find an abode that is fearless in the face of death?

The master replied: When you realize that the nature of your mind never arises, you may seem to change bodies, but you do not move from the empty and lucid dharmakaya, the nature of your mind. You can firmly resolve on that.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: What is the abyss of the six classes of beings?

The master replied: That which appears as the manifold sufferings of the six classes of beings is not created by anyone else. It happens because you fail to recognize your own nature.<sup>13</sup> It is your own mind that harms itself. You can and should firmly resolve that the great emptiness of your own mind is free from the ground and root of suffering.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Can this nature of mind be tainted by karma and habitual tendencies?

The master replied: Karma and habitual tendencies, as well as everything virtuous—good thoughts, meditating, and meditation objects—are mind. Evil thoughts and that which creates nonvirtue are also mind. Since this mind never arises, and is empty, insubstantial, and wide open, you can firmly resolve that it is beyond being tainted by any virtuous or unvirtuous karma.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Does there exist any abyss into which one might fall?

The master replied:

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13. The *Lama Gongdü* version reads: "It appears from you, but you don't realize that."



The root of falling is a thought that is your own.  
The place of falling is an abyss that is you.  
The fear of falling is your mind's suspicious thought.  
Samsara is your mind's deluded form.  
So when you see your mind is dharmakaya's vastness,  
The worlds of the six beings are but buddhafi elds.

You can firmly resolve on that.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Can the view possibly fall into any partiality?

The master replied:

The view free from deviations  
Is impartial like the sky.  
Everything is mind and mind itself is empty  
And free from partiality just like the sky.

You can firmly resolve on that.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Can that which we cultivate in meditation really be obscured or clarified?

The master replied:

Let be as changeless dharmata  
Within the empty essence of your mind.  
This wakefulness is ceaseless and nondual,  
And lucid like the sphere that is the sun.

You can firmly resolve that it is basically beyond being obscured.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Is there anything in the conduct to adopt or avoid?

The master replied:

The conduct free from anything to adopt and to avoid  
Is like a flawless crystal ball  
Placed upon a silken cushion of five hues.  
All you do is the empty, lucid mind itself  
Which is not made of faults or qualities.  
All you see is self-occurring, self-dissolving.

You can firmly resolve on that.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Does a fruition exist to be accomplished from somewhere else?

The master replied:

Present in yourself, it can not be achieved.  
As with the precious wishing gem,  
All wishes and desires are fulfilled by you yourself,  
Likewise, buddhahood with all its supreme virtues  
Arises from realizing your own mind.  
Your mind since the very beginning is self-present  
dharmakaya.

You can firmly resolve on that.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Should we regard outer appearances as imperfect?

The master replied:

Do not find faults in outer things;

As personal display, they have substance.  
Just like reflections in a mirror,  
They are seen but are not really there.

You can firmly resolve on that.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Should we regard our thoughts as imperfect?

The master replied:

Don't see thoughts as being faulty.  
Like the waves upon the ocean,  
Any thought that may arise  
Within the quiet emptiness that is your mind  
Is but the dharmata's display.

You can firmly resolve on that.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Should we depend upon conditioned roots of virtue?

The master replied:

Fabricated dharmas are all conceptual mind,  
So all conditioned dharmas perish.  
Dharmata, however, is self-present timelessly.  
Be free from effort in conditioned, material virtues.

You can firmly resolve on that.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Can original wakefulness manifest or vanish?

The master replied:

The wakeful knowing appearing in yourself  
Is itself lucid since the beginning,  
So its identity is natural brightness, free from outside or  
an inside.

This wakefulness is vast, self-present, natural knowing.

You can firmly resolve on that.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Can cause and result be divided into two?

The master replied:

Every being has the essence of enlightenment,  
Timeless buddhas, no division into cause or in result.  
No new “thing” is there to find or be accomplished.

You can firmly resolve on that.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Should love and hate be rejected?

The master replied:

The five poisons are not to be rejected,  
Nor is wakefulness a “thing” to be achieved.  
An enemy is not a mark for hatred,  
Nor should you bind yourself to friends with love.

Your empty mind is the doer of all, so you can firmly resolve that the five poisonous emotions are self-dissolving.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Are samsara and nirvana respectively evil and good?

The master replied:

Conditioned is the nature of samsara.

Conditioned means unreal and transient.

The nature of this transience is emptiness,

A timeless, empty vastness beyond evil, beyond good.

You can firmly resolve on that.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: How are the three kayas present within oneself?

The master replied: The empty nature of mind is dharmakaya; its cognizance is sambhogakaya; and its unconfined quality is nirmanakaya. Essentially free of the three poisons, you can firmly resolve that the three kayas are primordially present within you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Can the nature of dharmata be applied in practice?

The master replied:

When realizing mind, its empty nature,

You see that buddhahood is not a place which you must reach.

Nor is it gained by taking refuge in the Triple Gem.

It is no product, no *dharmā* made through effort or achievement.

You can firmly resolve on that.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Can we possibly fall into samsara?

The master replied:

In the empty nature of your mind,  
You cannot find a basis for samsara.  
Samsara's root, a timeless purity,  
Is undeluded wakefulness which cannot fall.

You can firmly resolve on that.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Is there a doer of Dharma practice?

The master replied:

In the essence of self-knowing, a primordial emptiness,  
Neither owner nor a Dharma practice can be found.  
The doer of the tenfold virtuous action is primordially an  
emptiness.  
And so, there is no doer of your Dharma practice.

You can firmly resolve on that.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Should we rely on personal instructions?

The master replied:

Buddha-mind is surely your own nature  
Present timelessly within you, no need it is there to seek.  
Your simple knowing is the dharmakaya;  
It cannot be shown to you by someone else.

You can firmly resolve that it needs no instruction.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Do realized practitioners still have to take rebirth?

The master replied:

In the sky-like nature of the mind,  
 No impelling force of karma can be found.  
 So the womb-doors<sup>14</sup> of the sixfold beings are left vacant.  
 Depleted are the gatherings of tendencies and karma.

Samsara's triple realm is overturned right from its depths.  
 The single sphere that is the nature of your mind  
 Is devoid of change and transmigration; as they basically  
 do not exist.

Birth and death are interrupted from their very root.

The sight of the *alaya's* rootless nature  
 Evaporates the streams of birth and old age, of sickness  
 and of death.

Inevitably, it purifies all karmic ripening,  
 Annuls and renders void the sixfold causes.

Without rejecting it, samsara has dissolved into itself.  
 Without achieving it, nirvana is accomplished.  
 Intermingled, samsara and nirvana are not two in  
 dharmakaya.

There is no basis for another karmic rebirth.

Thus he spoke.



The master then said: Tsogyal, this instruction is the path traversed by the buddhas of the three times, since they all awakened within this

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14. The entrances into rebirth among the six classes of beings.

nature. It is the path through which the beings of the three realms are liberated, since they are freed within this nature. It is the realization of me, Padma, so, Tsogyal, keep it in your heart.

It will strike fear in people lacking the right karmic readiness, who can fall into hellish states by maligning it. It will be a mirror for those with the right karmic fortune, who can attain liberation by simply being taught it. Therefore, do not propagate it now, but bury and seal it as a precious treasure. I entrust it to a fortunate person of karmic readiness who will open up the treasure's door.

Thus he spoke.



This cycle on resolving, the advice on descending with the view from above, the Lotus Master bestowed upon the Lady Tsogyal, extracting the very quintessence of his oral instructions. She wrote it down at the upper hermitage of Chimphu on the eighteenth day of the second autumn month in the Year of the Hare.



# *The Crystal Garland of Daily Practice*

ADVICE ON DAILY PRACTICE COMBINING THE MEANING  
WITH SIMILES FROM THE “SECRET CASKET OF THE PRECIOUS  
HEART TREASURE BELONGING TO UNCONFINED VASTNESS,”  
CONCERNING THE MAHAMUDRA OF THE COMPLETION  
STAGE IN THE LAMA GONGDÜ CYCLE

NAMO GHURU DHEVA DAKKINI HUNG.

Homage to unconfined vastness, the primordial  
completeness of the three kayas.

When training in the yoga of Path Mahamudra as an unceasing daily practice, it is vital to possess these instructions that combine the meaning with similes. Since the sugata-essence—the identity of the three kayas—remains within your stream-of-being, this teaching too is comprised of three parts:

1. The instruction in settling when unsettled, like shackling a convict
2. The instruction in stabilizing when settled, like a tired man taking a rest
3. The instruction on perfecting stability, like a traveler returning home

Moreover, nirmanakaya is when the multitude of thoughts are cleared; sambhogakaya is to be unmoved from that state and to recognize that the wisdoms are complete; dharmakaya is the purity that is free from every type of thought construct.

The simile for the fact of these three kayas being naturally present in a sentient being is a lost prince wandering on foot. The simile for recognizing and experiencing them through a master's extraordinary instruction is recognizing that the prince is of royal descent. The simile for awakening to enlightenment by reasserting the original ground and realizing the identity of these primordially present three kayas due to training in them is the prince reclaiming the royal throne.

Generally speaking, sentient beings, who are bound by every type of fetter, circle through the three realms while living in the worlds of the six classes of beings, and they undergo endless painful experiences. All this is caused by their involvement in the 84,000 negative emotions that are rooted in the belief in a self. Even though the 84,000 Dharma doors are taught as methods to be free from this demon of ego-belief, the key points are contained in a sublime master's profound and essential advice.

To explain, primordially pure mind contains the root of all phenomena, and this mind consists of three aspects: its identity, nature, and perceptions.

Mind's identity is dharmakaya, a primordial and utter purity, free from any construct whatsoever. But, failing to know that this is so, this unknowing forms the basis for circling about blindly.

Mind's nature is an unobscured, lucid knowing—radiant like the sun. But failing to recognize that this is the natural expression of wakefulness—which is both knowing and empty—creates confusion, like the simile of a small child who believes that her own reflection in water is a haunting appearance of someone else.

Mind's perceptions, all the movements of thought, are self-arising and self-dissolving since they arise from within the mind and dissolve back into the mind itself. But, failing to understand this to be self-

arising and self-dissolving, thoughts produce an incessant chain of objects and churn out a multitude of mental forms.

In this way, the basic ground may be free of confusion, yet confusion comes about because of not knowing the antidote in those three instances. The basic ground may be untainted, but the momentary belief in a self obscures. This distorted and mindless state then falls into the limit of [passive] nirvana, and although [true] nirvana—the awakened state of the buddha—may be present in oneself, failing to recognize it, it is of no avail.

In order to recognize it, you need a master's instructions together with various skillful means. A master's characteristics should be known through the four branches, and he should teach by means of six sets of view and meditation.

First, for the four branches, the master should do the following:

- comprehend and realize each person's state of being as the branch of freeing his or her nature
- understand and perceive the various types of intellect as the branch of receiving instruction
- apply without conflict with the general Dharma system as the branch of trusting and not growing tired
- supplement incompleteness with statements from numerous masters as the branch of enhancement

For the six sets of view and meditation, first is the sixfold distorted view and meditation to be discarded:

- A view that lacks confidence is like a feather blown about in the wind.
- A meditation training that lacks method is like a vulture with a broken wing.
- An application that lacks practice is like a confused and mistaken leader.

- Experience that lacks the signs of progress is like the autumn harvest destroyed by frost.
- Any conduct that lacks stability is like a blind man lost on the northern plains.
- A fruition that lacks recognition is like a small child being given a casket full of gold.

Here are the six sets of view and meditation with the confidence that comes with wisdom:

- A view that possesses the confidence of the natural state is like a vulture soaring through the skies.
- A meditation training that possesses skillful means and vital points is like a strong glue to which flies stick.
- To possess remedies acquired from experience is like a skilled doctor diagnosing the disease.
- Experience that possesses the signs of progress is like a young maiden tasting pleasure.
- Conduct that possesses stability is like using a spur on a strong, fast horse.
- A fruition that is free of hope and fear is like a traveler returning home.

First, the view is like the simile of the vulture that must use its wings to climb until it has reached the vast expanse of sky but upon reaching the open sky may soar without effort or anything to gain. Similarly, in this case, you should establish certainty in the view by means of three things—the Conqueror’s words, your own intelligence, and a sublime master’s instructions—until you have realized the natural state. Then you can repose in the realization of the ultimate view of the natural state and be beyond effort and gain in body, speech, and mind.

Moreover, recognize that perceived objects are your own mind, like seeing something in one’s dreams. Similarly, recognize that this mind

is empty, like seeing it to be empty space. Recognize that this emptiness never arises, like seeing that space is not matter nor does it have definable characteristics, and that it is free from every limitation such as arising, ceasing, or remaining.

Recognize that this nonarising is self-dissolving, like of seeing that every type of display—just like clouds, mist, or haze—unfolds within the expanse of space and then naturally dissolves within the same expanse.

While this is being taught, the foremost student will experience the self-existing wakefulness that unfolds from within, just like the sun shining in the sky, and be liberated during the same lifetime. The average student will settle upon this experience of realization as fresh, unbound, and natural, and be liberated through meditation training. Failing to gain realization within his or her stream-of-being, the lesser student must train using *shamatha* as the method for gaining realization, and be liberated once realization has gradually arisen within his or her stream-of-being.

Next is the meditation training that is like a strong glue in which a fly becomes permanently stuck. As a yogi, you should stick to the meditation experience, without interruption. While doing so, you should assume the three key points of body, speech, and mind. While clearly present as the yidam deity, visualize and supplicate the guru above your head. Imagine millions of dakinis dancing in manifold ways at the base of every hair on your body. Then gather your mind within your body at the level of your heart, and let both body and mind be totally unfettered, utterly free. Cease every movement of mind and mental events, and then just settle. Sever completely every type of thought—such as ideas of perceiving, being empty, or strategies—since they are all products of your own mind. While applying the three-kaya gazes, let be in naturalness free of adjusting—in the continuous state of the nature of this mind, simply as it is—which is awake, empty and alive.

When training in this way, always let your attention remain as undistracted as a mother whose only child has died, as uninterrupted as the flow of a river, as vigorous as a master archer releasing his arrow, with as balanced a concentration as a brahmin spinning his thread, as free of hope and fear as a madman, as free from attachment and reference point as a small child, as soaring and open as the sky, as bright and brimming as a huge lake, as free of dread and timidity as a lion prowling the mountain slopes, as free of partisan concepts as a king ruling his country.<sup>15</sup> In short, as a yogi, you should remain as an expansive evenness, attuning your experience to your master's instruction, improving it until you gain certainty.

During the break between sessions, exert yourself in expounding the teachings on cause and effect, and in supporting them with statements from the sutras and tantras. Use examples to illustrate them, and retell the lives of the accomplished masters and other stories, so as to inspire trust and delight. Teach the methods to adjust the physical state and how to behave.

Since conduct is of primary importance for stabilizing the meditation training, prolong the meditation whenever you feel at ease. When your physical state feels ill at ease—such as having a headache, heaviness of body, nausea, aversion towards meditation, or anger—refresh yourself in a relaxed and cheerful way by leaving body, speech, and mind in naturalness. Move about as you like, and meditate in short, but numerous, periods.

When you have refreshed yourself, end the session while still at ease—never while uncomfortable. Do not end the session while unclear or during thought movements but while experiencing clarity and nonthought. Take food and drink that suit your constitution, and follow the right mode of conduct. When you keep to these, you will not tire of the meditation training. Ending the session while it is good

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15. Partisan concepts of "them and us" regarding citizens.

causes one to later joyfully take up the practice again, and it also ensures that the qualities will continue to develop in your stream-of-being.

If it happens that one errs during this meditation practice, here is the third point: the *remedies acquired from experience*, like a skilled doctor identifying a disease. Involvement in dullness, agitation, and lethargy are faults, so it is vital to recognize them immediately. Therefore, clear up the dullness, arouse yourself from the mindless state, collect yourself when distracted, and soften the breathing when agitated. Why do faults occur? They come from failing to remain in stillness, from clinging to effort, and from keeping sessions that are too long.

The four causes for dullness are activity, occasion, food, and clothing. The remedies are these: Recognize dullness by remembering its shortcomings and focus your attention vigorously. Raise your spirits. Warm your eyes with your palms, and rub them lightly. Squint repeatedly, and focus your gaze. Lift the upper torso to refresh yourself. Use these activities to invigorate yourself. Sit in a cooler place. Play cymbals, dance, perform yogic exercises, and so on. If you exaggerate these too much, there is the danger of straying into a negative habit, so it is important to refresh yourself in a balanced way.

Lethargy is like a butter lamp with dirty butter and a soiled wick placed where there is no air. Since lethargy is difficult to remedy, here is the instruction for expanding the energy of mind: Focus the attention first on the soles of your feet, then on your knees, then the navel, then the heart, the throat, the skull, and finally the top of your head. Practice this gradually until you are clear. When clear, continue until your awareness expands to pervade all of space. Alternately, imagine that everything is empty, and focus your attention on a pea-size sphere—the union of wind and mind—in the center of your heart. Imagine that it grows larger and larger and then turns into your guru. His radiance then completely dissolves your body and the guru into light. Then let your attention settle firmly, without dwelling on any-

thing at all, in the state in which this light has vanished like a cloud dissolving into the sky. As an alternative, you can remain utterly lucid and transparent in the state in which your body is like a tent of white silk or an inflated balloon.

The mindless state comes from having constricted your mind in stillness; therefore imagine that you are sitting naked at the top of a snow mountain in the middle of a fierce blizzard, and keep your attention unwaveringly on that.

Alternately, imagine that your four limbs have become a huge ocean and you find yourself perched on the bowstring of a bow floating on its surface; or else imagine that you are suspended from a cord strung between two huge mountains.

The state of distraction, from which we should collect ourselves, also has four causes:

- many activities and tasks
- despised enemies
- loving friends
- natural distraction with no specific focal point

These faults are due to not having resolved the view. Here are the methods to remedy them:

Do not try to suppress these states of mind, as this will not stop them, and do not pursue any of the sense impressions. Instead, imagine thumb-size spheres of light one arm's length away from your body in each of the four directions, each sphere being firmly connected to you as if with tent ropes. Keep your attention unwavering on this visualization.

Alternatively, keep your attention unwaveringly on the center of a cubit-size wheel spinning right in front of you. Or, as in the context of tracking down the mind, embark on the task of seeking the mind everywhere, inside and outside, and settle in the state of not finding.

Or else, focus on the exact object of your distraction. Or, when a



thought suddenly appears, look into first where it came from, next where it remains, and finally where it goes. Then settle into the not finding.

Or you can imagine that your naked body is lightly floating upon the surface of a smooth, calm ocean and then sinking into the water. Or else you can keep your attention on any given thing that is thrown into a vessel that is floating half-submerged upon the calm surface of a body of water. Or you can imagine you hold a torch from which flames blaze out to fill the entire universe. After having done any of these, apply one of the three-kaya gazes.

In general, agitation is the least of these shortcomings; it is like the flame of a brightly burning butter lamp set aflutter by a waft of air. It can be steadied by binding the lower part while practicing the great bliss of the lower gate.

If you still remain unclear after practicing any of these, it is a sign of lacking the karmic readiness, so in that case, exert yourself in gathering the accumulations.

To remain dull is a sign of having slandered sublime objects, so offer a cleansing for the representations of enlightened body, speech, and mind. Generate devotion, make supplications, and offer praises.

To first become clear and then grow dim is a sign of being hindered by the demonic meditation moods of hope and fear, so present a lavish *torma* and feast offering, and make rituals of mending and apology. Exert yourself in the methods for clearing breaches and violations of samaya.

If you still fail to catch hold of the meditation state through these means, then hurl your consciousness into the expanse of space above you. Similarly, you can aim into the space that lies below you, the midair, behind, in front, to the right, or to the left. Sometimes, close your eyes and aim into what lies ahead of you.

At times, go to a lofty meadow and gaze into space, whistle a shrieking sound, and train in letting your attention focus steadily on

a sight, sound, scent, taste, or texture, or on the shape of someone who is friendly or hostile towards you. When you finally become exhausted, you will have an experience that is like a clear sky. Continue the meditation training while composed in that state.

Generally speaking, a person with a predominance of wind should not meditate in a windy place, one with a predominance of phlegm should not meditate in a shady place, and someone suffering from bile disorder should avoid meditating in the sun.

Someone with a predominance of wind or who has a disease induced by cold should train in the *tummo* key points involving essence and *atung*.<sup>16</sup> At times, visualize fire and clear away the diseases of wind and cold. Once the warmth has been generated, spread it like a blanket while maintaining the heat in moderation. Apart from clearing away a hindrance, the warmth should not be brought to the extreme.

Someone with a predominance of bile should train in the hollow form.<sup>17</sup> The person with a predominance of heat should keep to shady places, avoid places that are too warm, and, to some extent, refrain from food and drink that are too rich or heat-inducing. Do not do any task that makes you sweaty, and refrain from everything that places stress on your mind.

In these ways, stay away from all types of physical, verbal, or mental activities that harm your meditation training. Do everything that helps your meditation or is effective for the key points of your training.

In any case, for authentic meditation training, it is essential to give up every physical, verbal, or mental distraction. Samadhi naturally occurs when you are free from distractions of body, speech, and mind; then meditation experiences blaze forth and extraordinary realization

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16. The essence is the white syllable at the crown of the head while the *atung* refers to the small flame of inner heat in the *tummo* practice.

17. "The hollow form" refers to the insubstantial form of the deity, the visualization of which counteracts the belief in one's identity being a body of solid matter.

will be born within your stream-of-being. It is difficult for a person who does not rid himself of physical, verbal, or mental distractions to gain an authentic meditation state.

The meditation state of an uninformed yet intelligent person will, for the most part, go astray into speculations, but the bright and stable-minded type of person will gain a meditation state that is in accordance with the scriptures. In any case, the mingling of the profound Dharma of development and completion with one's stream-of-being stems from a karmic connection from former lives and from persevering in the present life. It does not happen for just anyone.

Fourth, upon having trained in this way, the experience that possesses the signs of progress is like a young maiden tasting pleasure. At first it is like water falling through steep mountains; next it is like water flowing through a riverbed; and finally it is like a tranquil ocean where all bubbles have dissolved. At first it is like a small child riding a horse; next it is like a youngster devoted to horse riding; and finally it is like an adult who has mastered his horse and who can race anywhere, uphill or downhill. At first it is like the sun hidden by clouds; next it is like the sun between clouds; and finally it is like the sun in a clear and cloudless sky. At first it is like recognizing a robbery; next it is like investigating the thief; and finally it is like the thief being locked away.

The experiences of shamatha include feeling that:

- one does not have a body;
- the body is firm and unwavering;
- the body is being weighed down from above;
- one is at ease without any pain at all;
- it is as if one is floating in midair and the lungs and heart are all open like space;
- the body is a visible emptiness like a haloed rainbow body;
- there is no noticeable movement of breath;

- the consciousness is lucid and tranquil, radiant, clear, and brilliant;
- all perceptions are evanescent, transparent, and open, that they have the color of dawn, and that they are wobbly;
- one is thrilled and would rather not interrupt the meditation session;
- while in composure, all shapes are blurred;
- all mental activity stops so that there is no perception;
- the consciousness is as bright as a clear sky;
- it is naturally lucid without any concept or clinging.

When these occur, whether it is day or night, they are the experience of perfection in shamatha.

The causes for shamatha are:

- laying the basis with pure discipline;
- stabilizing it with development stage and building strength with recitation;
- and, since its identity is undistracted attention, defeating emotions and thoughts.
- Finally, it is attained through the strength of perfect attention.

In other words, your mind remains in authentic shamatha when all concepts of distorted thinking have been brought to a standstill, when not distracted by notions, and when unwavering from single-mindedness.

These methods quiet a restless mind and imprison a mischievous mind, like chaining a savage or robber so that he cannot move. Similarly, confining the attention by various means prevents thoughts from straying towards sense objects and creates steadiness.

In brief, these were the nirmanakaya instructions of the true Dharma to clear the multitude of thoughts from the mind and to pacify any concepts due to believing in a solid reality.

## SAMAYA. 8

The instruction for stabilizing stillness is like an exhausted man taking a rest. By training in the way described above, the experiences that confirm that shamatha has dawned as *vipashyana* include:

- remaining unmoved from the nature that never arises;
- confidence in the true nature of reality;
- a total refinement of all senses and perceptions;
- a blissful ease permeating all parts of the physical body so that there is a feeling of breaking into laughter;
- true delight in the mind at all times;
- no doubt whatsoever that things don't exist and that mind cannot be bound by anything.

There can also be the feeling of having turned away from attachment to appearances, or of a man in the prime of life hitting his target with an arrow over rough terrain.

There can be other types, such as:

- never tiring of Dharma practice, like never being betrayed by an old, close friend;
- the six senses being free and unbound, like a small child or a madman;
- no thought whatsoever being able to cause harm, like having identified a thief;
- having turned away from attachment and indolence, like a young maiden tasting pleasure;
- the mind no longer clinging to mundane thrills, like a wise man seeing a rainbow;
- or, every thought being recognized to be nonthought, like being on an island of gold where no ordinary stones or dirt can be found.

Further signs are:

- thoughts dissolving into dharmata, like bubbles dissolving back into the water;
- yearning for the profound teachings, like a mother who has not seen her only child for a long time;
- discovering one's mind, as if you were a penniless man finding wealth;
- understanding all of the profound teachings as precisely as the voice of a young *kalapinga* bird;<sup>18</sup>
- compassion for beings who fail to realize [the nature of mind] welling up as spontaneously as lust in a young man upon seeing a beautiful woman;
- all appearances being visible and yet insubstantial, as if they were reflections in a mirror;
- every concrete thing—such as earth and stones, rocks and mountains, plants and trees—dissolving as if they were a shimmering mirage;
- seeing other people and all other sentient beings to be like reflections, so that there is no longing for anyone;
- feeling like a cloudless sky, pure water, a clean mirror, a stainless crystal—totally bright and free of clinging;
- feeling, “What else could the conquerors and their offspring have realized?” and hardly bearing to leave it;
- the feeling of ease continuing after standing up;
- there being an atmosphere of trust since you feel, “Both my body and mind are so at ease!”;
- your mind being captivated by the taste of meditation, so that there is no hankering after any sense pleasure;
- or feeling deeply satisfied by the nature of true certainty.

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18. The *kalapinga* bird is known for its extremely clear and beautiful voice.

In short, you experience the three meditation moods of bliss, clarity, and nonthought.

Bliss includes the two experiences of physical bliss and mental bliss. Physical bliss begins with bliss intermingled with emotions and then bliss free from emotions—a bliss that permeates all of the body, from head to toe, outside and inside until finally every type of touch, whether hot, cold, or painful, feels utterly blissful. In this way, there can be countless types of bliss experiences. Mental bliss is the complete absence of mental uneasiness and includes countless different types of delight and pleasure.

The experience of clarity includes clarity of the five senses and mental clarity. The clarity of the five senses is experienced as:

- seeing the ten signs<sup>19</sup> that indicate taking hold of the mind within;
- seeing various types of sentient beings and shapes;
- hearing the sound of large drums, or hearing and understanding the voices of the smallest insects and many other kinds of beings;
- smelling the scents of *devas*, *nagas*, *yakshas*, and so forth, as well as experiencing the various types of extrasensory perceptions through scent;
- tasting numerous types of flavor so that it feels as if one is experiencing untainted ambrosia when savoring ordinary food and drink;
- feeling sensations of touch that occur in the same way as the others.

Mental clarity can be experienced as:

- a profusion of concepts about what should be discarded with which remedies;

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19. The ten signs are seen as smoke, mirages, flames, fireflies, moonlight, sunlight, glows of fire, red and white spheres, rainbows, and shooting stars.

- insights about the connection between intelligence, proliferation of thoughts, and outer and inner interdependence;
- brightness, lucidity, and an absence of deep sleep or mental dullness;
- or as the feeling of understanding everything, as well as countless other types of insights.

At the beginning, nonthought is experienced as attention that stays where it is directed, and then as the gradual subsiding of thoughts until the attention remains still wherever it is placed. At the end, there is a feeling as if every thought formation has quieted down.

After [the three meditation moods of bliss, clarity, and nonthought] have been embraced by insight, bliss will be experienced as the insight that pleasure is insubstantial and, as the result of that, the absence of hankering after its taste. Clarity will be experienced as the understanding of cause and effect, as well as the absence of the scattered and agitated states. Nonthought will be experienced as the attainment of an unwavering stability.

After having gained these experiences, you come to the fifth point: to maintain the conduct that possesses stability, which is like the simile of spurring a strong, fast horse. There are five types of conduct: the ever-excellent conduct, secret conduct, conduct of awareness discipline, group conduct, and the conduct of total victory.

First the ever-excellent conduct is to remain settled—without parting from the above experiences during everyday activities such as walking, moving about, lying down, or sitting—in a natural way free from clinging or attachment during the moment-to-moment meetings with appearances and sense objects. This is like the sky that remains unaffected even if covered by clouds, or like water or a mirror that remains unchanged even if there are reflections moving across them. At times there will be a sudden separation from the experienc-



es due to becoming distracted, but, like recognizing a person whom you already know, you can then remain undisturbed in the natural state of mind. In this way, without there being any need for correcting thoughts with an antidote, every thought will go totally quiet or will naturally dissolve, like snowflakes landing on a hot stone or like raindrops on a lake.

When this has happened, you should engage in the secret conduct in order to bring forth enhancement. This means that you should bring along an authentic consort as your companion in places frequented by fierce gods and demons—such as charnel grounds, under solitary trees, or the like—and with the consort become trained in the methods for strengthening the relative, moving essences, as described in the secret guidance manuals. Through this you will gain the tremendous bliss experience that remains wherever the attention is aimed, so that it permeates the entire body; additionally, appearances are experienced as bliss, and you come to realize them to be like mist, rainbows, or heaps of cotton. Supersensory perceptions will arise in your mind, and you will have the ability to perform magical displays. When this happens, remain settled, totally free from hope and fear, from clinging to solid reality or giving rise to excessive pride.

Following this, you should keep to the conduct of awareness discipline that might mean stripping naked and smearing on fresh ashes from a charnel ground, putting on charnel-ground clothing and bone ornaments, sounding the *damaru* while dancing around, or running through the charnel ground, the city and other places to examine whether or not the previous state of samadhi is at all unstable. Check to see whether or not being seen by other beings can or cannot affect it. Act impulsively, and in these ways maintain your experience.

Once you have gained stability in that type of conduct, then maintain the group conduct, which means going where there are huge crowds, a large market gathering, or to the houses of the most base or

outcast people. Sing, enjoy, and dance to bring out the full strength of your awareness, heighten your senses, trample on your timidity, identify your weaknesses, expose your limitations, and cut through your fetters and clinging to a solid reality. At this time, even if others criticize or beat you, and the like, everything will be a help, just like the wind helping to fan the flames of a fire.

Upon having improved through these methods, embark on the conduct of total victory, which means to conquer sleep by training in lucid wakefulness, to conquer food by transforming it into ambrosia, and to conquer the inner winds (*lung*) by transmuting them into the wind of awakening. In this way, you become someone who has gained total victory over everything, beyond partiality towards samsara or nirvana. Just like space transcends wet or dry, your mind is now beyond being helped or harmed, so that you will remain untouched even if you commit one of the five harmful actions entailing immediate and severe consequences at death. When you do not carry out even the ten virtuous actions<sup>20</sup>—the means to improve—when your mind is uninvolved in even conventional reason, and when you have leveled out the eight concerns including fame, if everything is experienced as the play of dharmakaya, then you have reached the end of the types of conduct.

This is the true basis of insight or the stage of stability in stillness. Since your mind is free from clinging and attachment, it is the final interruption of karma, emotion, and thought. You have attained the fruition, the strength of true knowledge.

These were the sambhogakaya instructions to stabilize the stillness of naturally present samadhi, the advice to refresh the exhausted, to dissolve the thought activity of believing in and clinging to a solid

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20. The ten virtuous actions are, generally, to refrain from the ten nonvirtues—killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, slander, abusive speech, senseless speech, coveting, ill will, and wrong views. In particular, they are to engage in their opposites; for example, to save life, be generous, and so forth.

reality, and to clarify original wakefulness by being unmoved and undistracted from it.

### SAMAYA. ३

Next are the instructions in perfecting the stability, like a traveler returning to his own home, which means that the fruition is to be stable in the above realization. This means that dharmakaya appears from the transformation of the previously mentioned state of non-thought as the outcome of the effort of training. This has five aspects of perfection:

- The perfect place is the vast womb (*bhaga*) of Samantabhadri, the all-encompassing expanse of dharmadhatu, endless and oceanlike.
- The perfect teacher is the self-existing Samantabhadra, the glorious dharmakaya of great bliss.
- The perfect retinue is the original wakefulness of self-knowing.
- The perfect teaching is a vast and all-pervasive compassion that transcends conceptual focus.
- The perfect time is the moment that lies beyond every type of conceptual attribute.

These are the perfect fruition for the benefit of oneself.

Training in the experience of the previously mentioned state of bliss lets the sambhogakayas appear from its transformation. They possess these five equivalents:

- The equivalent place is the densely arrayed realm of Akanishtha.
- The equivalent teacher is the transcendent, free conqueror, glorious Vairochana or a *heruka*, a sambhogakaya adorned with numerous major and minor marks.
- The equivalent retinue consists of knowledge-holders and bodhisattvas who reside on the levels.

- The equivalent teaching is exclusively the teachings of the greater vehicles.
- The equivalent time is the original eon, the time of excellence.

Training in the experience of the previously mentioned state of clarity lets the nirmanakayas<sup>21</sup> appear from its transformation. They possess these five diversities:

- The diverse places consist of countless world-systems.
- The diverse teachers are displayed in forms that correspond to whoever needs to be influenced.
- The diverse retinues are the six classes of sentient beings.
- The diverse teachings are the Dharma teachings that appear through the venues of the various vehicles.

All these are the perfect fruition that is for the benefit of others.

Are these three kayas separate or not? The three are in fact not separate within the original and uncontrived state of mind that is the essence-body (*svabhavikakaya*).

How do the three kayas appear from the single essence body? The dharmakaya free from every type of construct appears when awakened and freed from the two obscurations. Bodhisattvas still have the cognitive stains and are therefore unable to perceive more than the sambhogakaya, the form adorned with the thirty-two major and the eighty minor marks of excellence. Sentient beings with dedicated interest still have emotional stains and are therefore unable to perceive more than the nirmanakayas, which are merely a reflection that corresponds to their individual state of mind.

The two form bodies may be present for those still within samsara, but they remain untainted by samsara's dust. Dharmakaya remains in

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21. The original manuscript includes this footnote: "such as the Munis of the six realms."

a state of great peace, but it is untainted by nirvana's limitation. This is why it is called the body of great bliss (*mahasukhakaya*).

After realization, the state of mind of the buddhas of the three times, the minds of the sentient beings of the three realms, and the insight of the yogis are all one within the sphere of this realization. This is like a traveler who, upon returning home, is free from the notions of having or not having reached his homeland, and from the notion of fear that dangers might appear. Similarly, you are now free from the fear of samsara or the hope for nirvana.

These were the dharmakaya instructions in the nature of mind that is in essence free from conceptual attributes and beyond every type of construct.

SAMAYA. ॐ

In this way, you should carry on your daily practices while combining the meaning with similes.

May these instructions, given to the present king and his sons for the sake of all followers in future generations, meet with the devoted person endowed with the karmic fortune.

SAMAYA. ॐ SEAL, SEAL, SEAL. ॐ

SEAL OF CONCEALMENT. ॐ

SEAL OF ENTRUSTMENT. ॐ

SEAL OF TREASURE. ॐ

DHATHIM. ॐ ITHI. ॐ



## *The Precious Golden Garland of Meditation Instructions*

NAMO GHURU.

The bodily form of the great master known as the Lotus-Born was unchanging like the sun. His speech was unceasing like a stream, and his mind unobstructed like the sky. His qualities were beyond increase and decrease like a river, and his activity unimpeded like the wind. His realization was equal to that of the buddhas, and he taught the Dharma in conformity with the six classes of beings.

Lady Tsogyal, the Princess of Kharchen, served this nirmanakaya, who was as famous as the sun on the Jambu continent. While he was residing at the Juniper Ridge of Crystal Pearls, she pleased him in thought, word, and deed. Then she made the following request: Great master, what is the prelude to meditation practice for a devoted person who desires to meditate?

The master replied: The prelude for meditation practice is to gather the accumulations, receive the oral instructions, cut the ties of attachment, and collect necessities. Tidy your dwelling, which should be uplifting and of an appropriate size. Having done so, form the compassionate attitude of bodhichitta and resolve to establish all sentient beings in enlightenment. In your dwelling, arrange a stuffed cushion with a clean filling of cotton, wool, or the like. Rid yourself of bodily excretions such as feces and urine. From your throat and nose, expel mucus. Then assume the cross-legged posture. Place your hands in

equanimity, the body straight and upright, your head neither bowed nor bent, your eyes lowered in the direction of the nose, and the teeth and lips in their ordinary way. In short, train in meditation while letting your three doors be in their natural state.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: How should one keep the mind during meditation?

The master replied: While meditating, let your body and mind relax. Since there is nothing whatsoever to be analyzed, the stream of dualistic mind and the mental states arising from it are interrupted. You do not have to deliberately halt them. While neither keeping nor rejecting anything, let go of all mental activity. Don't think of anything, and don't imagine anything. Your nature is aware, just as it is. Without moving toward anything, let be in your natural state.

When remaining in this way, the knower and the known are not seen as separate, so don't think of the object as being there or the knower as being here. Do not conceive of something other than those two. Since you neither pursue an object there nor try to stop a thought here, you can allow mind itself to be pure, lucid, and awake, without needing to dwell on anything whatsoever.

The flaws that hinder this are excitement, drowsiness, and deep-rooted beliefs. Excitement means the mind's act of reaching out towards objects. The way to adjust this is to relax your body and mind while keeping your attention collected. Settle it again and again. If you still chase after different thoughts, repeatedly direct your attention toward this jumpy mind.

If you are unable to do that and thoughts continue to reach out, investigate this outward movement that is like a cloud in the sky—where does it come from, where does it move toward, and where does it remain? By exploring like this, allow the thought movements that arise from mind to subside again by themselves. As these thought



movements are empty, there is no need to tightly restrict or deliberately prevent them. That was the instruction in dissolving excitement and the movement of thoughts.

Drowsiness is like being in a dark room or having your eyes closed. To correct this, refresh yourself with activities such as spiritual practices, reflection, or the like. To refresh by means of samadhi, visualize yourself to be space, visualize your spine to be a stack of chariot wheels, and imagine your mind to be like the sky. To refresh by means of instruction, meditate while observing a sense object or while just keeping the senses wide open. These were the instructions in clearing up drowsiness.

Dullness is when your mind becomes hazy or absentminded, as if affected by an evil spirit. If that happens, set the practice aside and return to meditating after a while. That was the instruction in getting rid of mindlessness.

Deep-rooted beliefs have three faults. Since the training in dharma is supposed to be habituating oneself by not focusing and not fixating on anything whatsoever, it is a fault if you hold a rigid belief—let alone all the contradictory concepts, such as “it is such and such” and “it isn’t such and such,” eternity and void, antidotes to accept in order to reject, or the like. It is also a fault to harbor even a tiny speck of a notion or belief that “all these things are unreal appearances!” or “all things are inconceivable, so I should meditate on not holding them in mind!” That was the instruction in clearing away rigid beliefs.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: What types of experiences of realization arise from meditation training?

The master replied: Since samsara has no concrete substance, while training, all the various types of labels—such as the “appearance” or

“disappearance” of things, or that they “neither arise nor cease,” and so forth—are just momentary labels used to indicate that fact.

So, as you train in this way, you come to realize that these things of concrete substance have no verifiable identity whatsoever. And, since samsara has no concrete substance, it is not something that can be discarded, nor is nirvana something that can be obtained. You also come to realize that these two are merely labels and that, according to the definitive meaning, none of the phenomena of samsara and nirvana are in fact real at all. And this you realize in actuality, beyond the domain of ideas, not merely in words, but decisively from deep within your mind.

There are however people who, without realizing this, use the phrase “None of these things ever arose!” and train in holding the idea that “all this is emptiness!” To do so is known as a mere meditation-mood.<sup>22</sup> By keeping such an idea in mind, you will not gain certainty.

After realizing things to be like this, do not focus on ideas of them being in any particular manner. Things may be experienced in an ordinary way, but you will not find a shred of a concrete or tangible mind that can be seen or held as a focus. Since no impression of its nature can be experienced nor anything be perceived by a perceiver, the thought, “Its nature is such and such,” doesn’t even occur. Nevertheless, you have still not abandoned the tendencies for deluded thinking.

At this point, all things are seen with their own individual features, though evanescent and insubstantial like the colors that appear before your eyes on the smooth surface of water. Besides that, there is no involvement in concepts of “it is this” or “it is that,” and you see the identity of this knowing mind as clearly and evidently as the sky.

This is the time when you lose track of yourself, feeling as if you

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22. The temporary moods of bliss, clarity, and nonthought that are experienced in meditation states.

are the sky itself. Or, you may feel scared or nervous because of seeing the perceiver and perceived as separate, and you no longer want to remain in this state. Seeing yourself as simply name-and-form,<sup>23</sup> you don't entertain the idea of being a real sentient being. After rising from this state, when you briefly investigate things while engaging in daily activities, you experience only a vivid state of "seeing no concrete things." You don't feel as if you are really walking when walking, and there is no sense of eating when you are eating food.

At this point, when you investigate things, you realize that there is neither something to accept nor to reject, that "things and I are nothing but deceptive, magical illusions." Since you see everything to be like space, you don't see yourself as being you and others as being others. When closing your eyes and letting the mind face inward, all objects become slightly vague, the flow of thought is interrupted, and there are no appearances, so the mind's lucidity gains a space like quality. You don't sense that you have a body, nor do you notice the movement of your breath. The state of mind at this time resembles the unmoving brightness of a mirror turned towards the sky at dawn. It remains totally lucid, free of any focus or concept, while it is clearly evident to itself. This continues, unchanged, throughout day and night. From time to time, the stream of knowing gradually turns more solid but then gently the solidity vanishes again.

To improve on this, don't cling to being lucid or at ease, don't focus on anything, and don't cling to anything—simply let this state remain aware of itself. When you try to emerge from this state it doesn't feel as if you have, and even if you do briefly emerge from it, you gently return.

Due to having resolved how things are while sitting, perceived things appear in a normal fashion while you remain composed. You neither

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23. The phrase "name-and-form" refers to the five aggregates—the first being form and the last four being name—which here are seen to have no owner.

cling to nor focus upon them. If you can remain in such a way that you see even the yearning for enlightenment as an illusion and you hold no dread of samsara, then it is known as *seeing things without wavering*.

To develop this, cast away even a subtle form of object and thinker, including the concept that “it is such and such.” In other words, at first don’t suppress any thing, next don’t grasp hold of its presence, and finally don’t pursue it. Instead, allow it to rise from you and subside back into you. This ability to remain for as long as you wish is known as *pliable mind* or *absence of doing and striving*.<sup>24</sup>

While composed in this way, you may investigate things that you experience, either after rising from composure or during the composure itself. However, you find that there is no need to modify an insight nor to deliberately try to scrutinize any given perceived object. Every thought—no matter its type—is lucidly present as dharmata; every emotion—no matter its type—arises as dharmata; every pain—no matter its type—causes no harm; and every pleasure—no matter its type—brings no benefit. Your attention does not need improving, because it remains freely open. Even though you are not meditating, there is no separation from dharmata. Since there is nothing superior to this, you feel no doubt. As you see no meditation object, you find no need for mental effort. Since your attention has become dharmata itself, it remains beyond ebb and flow. This equality is *the realization of dharmakaya*. Once you gain stability in this way of being—which is not an ordinary, concrete state—it is known as the *natural experience of thought-free wakefulness*.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Which signs indicate correct training in meditation?

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24. The Lama Gongdü version adds: “. . . also known as *the naturally uncontrived essence of mind* or *seeing the total, lucid wakefulness*.”

The master replied: When you have trained in the above manner for a long time, the inner and outer signs will all appear.

The inner signs include:

- not noticing the inward and outward movement of breath while remaining composed;
- not feeling that there is a physical body;
- not sensing heat, cold, or even strong pain;
- and feeling a natural sense of delight that is not directed at anything whatsoever.

At this point, there is less clinging to any given sense object, less fixating on “it is such and such,” and less timidity in every regard. Selfishness, likes and dislikes, worries, the eight worldly concerns, and other types of thinking all become fewer and less pronounced. Until these signs have manifest, you must try your utmost to become in accord with them. You might also have some minor miraculous powers, clairvoyance of others’ minds, and the like. All these are the inner signs.

The outer signs include:

- seeing light shining in your body, or seeing various lights, colors, or shapes in midair;
- seeing the bodily forms of buddhas and other noble beings;
- hearing their voices and seeing their gestures of showing you respect;
- or that they give you teachings, predictions, and so forth.
- Clinging to these occurrences and believing in their lasting reality entails the flaw of becoming interrupted by Mara<sup>25</sup>. When

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25. A mara is a demon or demonic influence that creates obstacles for practice and enlightenment. Mythologically, mara is said to be a powerful god who dwells in the highest abode in the desire realm and the master of illusion who attempted to prevent the Buddha from attaining enlightenment at Bodhgaya. For the Dharma practitioner, Mara symbolizes one’s own ego-clinging and preoccupation with the eight worldly concerns.

you neither cling to nor believe in them, they indicate good qualities.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: What kind of daily activities should one undertake after rising from the state of composure?

The master replied: After rising from the above-mentioned state of composure, there are two ways of training. First, the *training that accords with insight* is to trust that everything you experience—you, yourself, as well as outer and inner things—are all illusory appearances, like in a dream. Keep this trust in mind during the four types of daily activities, no matter what you participate in or enjoy. However your body feels, train so that you neither suppress that feeling nor hold it in mind. In all activities of thought, word, and deed—whatever they may be—train in holding no focus.

The *training that accords with method* is to cultivate an illusory compassion for illusory sentient beings and, if it doesn't hamper your meditation state, then perform various actions to help them. Make vast aspirations such as the "*Aspiration of Noble Conduct*."<sup>26</sup> Discern between good and evil, and carry out various virtuous actions.

It wouldn't belong to the higher vehicles nor would it be the state of equality if at any point you engaged in virtuous actions while holding them to be real, so realize that you and all things are like a magical illusion. You should exert yourself in gathering the accumulations and purifying the obscurations until you have attained the confidence of equality in which you behold no substance of an accumulation to be gathered or an obscuration to be purified. Within the state of compo-

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(25 continued) Generally, there are four maras or obstructions to practice of the Dharma: those of defilements, death, the aggregates, and the godly mara of seduction. Sometimes the four maras are mentioned by name: Klesha, Lord of Death, Skandha, and Godly Son.  
26. The *Arya Bhadracharya Pranidhana Raja* ('Phags pa bzang po'i spyod pa'i smon lam kyi rgyal po), a famous aspiration found in the end of the *Flower Adornment Sutra*.

sure, be free from accepting and rejecting, and remain free from the fear of samsara resulting from misdeeds, as well as the hope of nirvana resulting from virtuous actions.

Even though you have attained such confidence of equality and can engage in actions free of accepting and rejecting, you should—while holding no conceptual focus—respect the ethics of vows and precepts in order to aid others in avoiding harmful actions and in adhering to virtue. In general, don't judge indulging or abstaining as being either good or evil. To engage in accepting or rejecting, or believing them to be real, is a barrier that prevents equality, just as white and black clouds both obscure the sun. But more so, it is the fault of preventing the understanding of suchness if you focus on precepts as either held or broken after you have attained the confidence of equality.

Don't let any emotional thought concerning success or failure, fame or gain, overtake you, and don't dwell upon them. Give up your personal shortcomings, such as foolish talk, distracting activities, and absentmindedness. Train in being totally gentle in all physical, verbal, or mental activities. Don't ponder the flaws of others; think instead of their good sides.

If you become boastful and haughty, conceitedly thinking, "I have special qualities. I have realized dharmata," it shows that you have not realized dharmata, so give it up. In short, since thinking is samsara and nonthought is nirvana, when the yogi remains among distractions and diversions, it is known as samsara; while remaining for even one moment in composure free of focus, that duration is known as nirvana.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: After having practiced in this way, how does one awaken to enlightenment?

The master replied: When you have trained in the thought-free nature of dharmata, thoughts—the causes of samsara—grow weaker

and more quiet, while thought-free wakefulness becomes spontaneously present. This wakefulness is serene; its domain of experience is utterly pure; and the three kayas and other enlightened qualities appear naturally, like rays that shine from the sun.

Once you have mastered this nature, your body may remain in the world of human beings but your mind abides at the stage of a buddha. Once you have practiced this way, there is no doubt that you will awaken to buddhahood in the bardo. In other words, within your sky-like personal experience—dharmakaya that is utterly uncreated—the sunlike sambhogakaya and nirmanakayas will, in the perceptions of others, work for the benefit of sentient beings, like the sun's rays.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: How should a person of average capacity train in meditation?

The master replied: Upon having resolved that all things are one's own mind, a person of average capacity should focus on the ceaseless state of dharmata that thoughts cannot grasp, and train in that state. By doing so, he or she does not need to avoid cultivating or thinking, since realization is already assured.

In other words, seeing all things as mind, no other thing whatsoever is seen. In any state of mind, mind is seen—there is no separation. Dharmata is seen even when deliberately meditating. Because of knowing that thought movements are the nature of mind, no matter how dharmata appears in the form of a thought, the nature of mind is self-evident. The notion of believing it to be any other thing is not formed. No matter how one's mind remains and no matter what is seen, its nature is self-evident and unceasing. It is evident even when not cultivated, and it is mastered even without training in it.

While remaining in this nature, no matter the details of objects that may occur, it will cause neither harm nor distraction. The perceiving of attributes by themselves is evidence of the nature of mind,



since there is no arising of a conceptual frame of mind. In this way, all phenomena reveal mind, and there is no moving away from that ceaseless state. So, free from effort, one is liberated without carrying out any activity. No matter how sense objects appear, they are seen to be mind, and even if any concept or mental state does occur, one's realization never moves away from dharmata at any time.

In this way, when all phenomena are seen to be mind and there is no slipping into a conceptual state—that is original wakefulness. For the yogi for whom this is an actuality, every sense experience whatsoever is seen to be dharmata and all perceptions are therefore a form of training. Hence all phenomena are no other than mind, and no other notion arises. As they do not arise, both objects and concepts are dharmata.

Through this realization, everything is experienced as mind. As this mind is intangible, one does not regard thoughts and concepts as flaws, and one trains during the thoughts themselves. This being so, every experience, whatever one is doing or feeling, is nothing other than further training. This shows the main principle that is *the single cut of view and meditation training*.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: How does one identify the original wakefulness that is dharmata?

The master replied: The pith instruction in recognizing original wakefulness is like a skilled doctor who diagnoses a disease by means of the sick person's demeanor, pulse, or urine. Similarly, the yogi should use three things—the Buddha's words, his guru's instructions, and his own experience—to recognize original wakefulness that is all-pervasive like space.

The total immediacy of original wakefulness is like the sun striking a mirror's surface. Similarly, the yogi should remain in the total immediacy of original wakefulness, free from any lucid images.

The key instruction for naturalness of the six collections<sup>27</sup> is like a person struck by an illness who holds no concepts of shyness or embarrassment. Similarly, the yogi should remain without forming concepts about any of the perceived objects.

The direct encounter with original wakefulness is like a wonderful healer who can use everything he or she touches as means to a cure. Similarly, once the ambrosia of the view is obtained, the yogi should use everything as means for original wakefulness.

The pith instruction for quieting the mind is like a turtle unable to move when placed in a basin. Similarly, the yogi's mind is unable to move once he or she has taken hold of it with the guru's instruction. All these pith instructions were the way to identify the original wakefulness that is dharmata.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: What is the method of settling this self-existing wakefulness?

The master replied: There are three methods for settling your mind. *To settle like a garuda soaring in the sky* means that the *garuda* soars when its wings are exhausted; it soars without effort or achievement; it soars while clearly seeing the land below; it soars while possessing the abilities of everyone beneath it; and it soars with fully developed wing power immediately upon hatching from the egg. Similarly, when settling into composure, the yogi should settle his or her exhausted mind, without effort, while seeing the principles of the higher vehicles, while containing the abilities of the lower vehicles, and while possessing the awakened state even though remaining in samsara.

*To settle it like a swallow entering its nest* means to do so without any further deliberation. The yogi should likewise settle his or her mind without any further deliberating thoughts.

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27. The six collections refer to perceiving the five sense objects plus mental objects.

*To settle like a man who has given up all activities* means not to adjust or modify the state of mind, no matter what it is. Similarly, the yogi should not adjust, modify, or otherwise contaminate his or her state of mind, no matter what it is.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: How many ways are there to safeguard awakened mind?

The master replied: There are three ways to safeguard it. Safeguard it as you would a wild horse, which should be tamed undistractedly; similarly, the yogi should remain undistracted from the nature of the view.

Safeguard it as you would a treasure of precious gems, which, unless you make efforts to protect it, is vulnerable to bandits and thieves. Similarly, the yogi should remain invulnerable to dullness and agitation, lest he allow his samadhi to stray.

Safeguard it as a king would his queen, so that people are unable to hurt the queen, as they are all included among her subjects. Similarly, the yogi should remain so that thoughts can cause no harm since he or she has realized all phenomena to be mind.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: How many ways are there to improve awakened mind?

The master replied: There are three ways to improve awakened mind. Improve it like a thief in an empty house—the thief leaves as there is nothing to steal. Similarly, when coarse or subtle thoughts occur, the yogi should observe them and then simply remain.

Improve it like a cloud in the sky. The cloud that forms in the sky vanishes by itself. Similarly, a thought should be left to subside by itself.

Improve it like using a spell to counter a poison. A person who knows a spell that counteracts poisons is capable of remaining unharmed by such poisons. Similarly, the yogi who possesses the pith instructions can experience everything as original wakefulness when he or she embraces it with the view.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: What are the three degrees of progress in dharmata?

The master replied: The following three degrees of progress have been taught:

- The measure of clarity is to be like an oil lamp that remains unmoved by wind.
- The measure of motionlessness is to be like the water in the ocean's depths.
- The measure of lightness and smoothness is to be like a speck of cotton.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: What are the three signs of progress?

The master replied: They are these three:

- The outer sign of progress is when you do not notice having a physical body.
- The inner is when the negative emotions do not arise.
- The innermost is when you are not directed toward any object whatsoever.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: How is the fruition attained?

The master replied: The yogi who is the identity of the three kayas

and four wisdoms attains it the very moment he or she is free from the encasement of the body.<sup>28</sup>



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: How does the person of the foremost capacity resolve the view?

The master replied: He or she resolves the view of original wakefulness by means of these nine analogies for the nondual mind of spacious vastness:

- All phenomena are the mind of spacious vastness, unbiased like a wish-fulfilling jewel.
- Mind is an unformed spacious vastness, unchanging like the vajra.
- This mind is a spacious vastness beyond conceptual attributes, an imperceptible identity like looking at dense darkness.
- Mind is an all-encompassing spacious vastness, immense like the sky.
- There is nothing other than this mind of spacious vastness; like reflections on a large lake, everything experienced is not different from this mind.
- This mind is an originally awakened spacious vastness, like the king's own child that no one needs to doubt.
- This mind is a spacious vastness from which any possible experience can unfold, like the *indranila* gemstone that can be perceived in manifold ways.

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28. The *Lama Gongdü* version gives three kayas and five wisdoms, as opposed to the four wisdoms mentioned here. These are the dharmadhatu wisdom, mirrorlike wisdom, wisdom of equality, discriminating wisdom, and all-accomplishing wisdom. There can be four when the last has not yet fully manifested, as in the first part of the bardo of dharmata.

- Mind is an unchanging spacious vastness, like pure gold, in that there is no transforming of the mind's nature no matter the state of the mind itself.
- The ninth spacious vastness is that everything is contained within mind.

This the yogi resolves.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: What determines the yogi's conduct?

The master replied: The yogi determines conduct by means of these analogies of enjoying with unattached skill:

- like skillfully enjoying reflections on the surface of a placid lake
- like skillfully enjoying stars in a clear sky
- like skillfully enjoying all that appears and exists within awakened mind

Thus, there is no harm in enjoying the five sense pleasures when they are embraced with the view.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: How does the yogi settle into the state of composure?

The master replied: The yogi should settle into the state of composure by means of these three unimpeded states of endless vastness:

- the unimpeded spacious state that is the endless vastness of the senses
- the unattached state free of clinging that is the endless vastness of dharmata which never arises
- the objectless state that is the endless vastness never moving away from self-knowing wakefulness

These three all mean to settle into composure while understanding the absence of fabrication.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: How should the yogi gain the confidence of fruition?

The master replied: Here I shall teach, by means of analogies, that no fruition should be sought apart from experiencing whatever arises as the nature of mind. All phenomena are like reflections appearing on the surface of a great lake or like the stars that appear in the sky which do not appear somewhere else but rather appear in the lake or the sky itself. Similarly, it is the nature of your self-knowing mind that is experienced as the fruition; it appears from you, and that which appears since the beginning is experienced as being your own display. So the fruition is experienced as you, yourself.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: What cuts the root of thoughts?

The master replied: Here I shall teach how thoughts can naturally dissolve, by means of three ways of improvement that transcend improving:

- The senses need no improving since they are clearly sense the sense objects.
- Dharmata needs no improving since it never arises.
- Thoughts need no improving since they are clearly seen to be original wakefulness.

Why is that? Because it should be understood that everything is original wakefulness since there is nothing other than mind. This is how thoughts naturally dissolve, since they are clearly seen to be dharmata.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Which key point explains how objects experienced do not need to be rejected?

The master replied: Here I shall teach by means of six analogies from the scriptures on self-liberated mind describing how nothing needs to be rejected since it is clearly seen:

- The senses need not be rejected while enjoying objects, since they are clearly seen to be dharmata, like an island of precious gold.
- Thoughts need not be rejected, since they are clearly seen to be original wakefulness, like adding wood to a fire.
- In dharmata, material things need not be rejected, since they are liberated without rejection, like the great garuda bird who hatches from its egg with fully developed wings.
- There is no thing to be settled in the state of composure, since composure and postmeditation are indivisible, like a bird hovering in midair.
- There is no negative emotion to reject and no obscuration to purify, since everything without exception is mind, just as no darkness exists to be cleared from the sun's orb.
- There is no need to separate mind and objects into two, since they are clearly seen not to be a duality, just as space cannot be divided into parts.

In other words, these are experiences of six aspects that need no suppression, since dharmata is clearly seen without suppression and cannot be suppressed even by attempting to do so.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Which key point explains how mind and dharmata are indivisible?



The master replied: These six analogies for indivisibility express how mind and dharmata are indivisible:

- Water and wetness cannot be separated.
- Fire and heat cannot be separated.
- A conch and its whiteness cannot be separated.
- Brocade and the brocade's pattern cannot be separated.
- The Golden Isle and its gold cannot be separated.
- Samsara and nirvana cannot be separated.

Similarly, all things and all sentient beings cannot be separated within the single great sphere. Being and nonbeing cannot be separated, but are clearly seen to be mind and hence the true, original wakefulness. Also, things are mind while mind is things, and therefore indivisible and no different.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Which analogies illustrate that all that appears and exists occurs from oneself?

The master replied: The same six analogies apply for the absence of sequence, illustrating how all that appears and exists is original wakefulness. The previous six simple analogies mentioned above show indivisibility and an absence of sequence. In this way there is no sequence between dharmata and all the things that appear and exist (*dharmas*), since they are all the great, original wakefulness, which is self-known and occurring from oneself.<sup>29</sup>



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: What can clear away the eight hindrances and the narrow passages on the path of the yogi's mind?

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29. Alternatively, the *Lama Gongdü* version reads: “. . . since they are all experienced as the self-existing, great original wakefulness.”

The master replied: Here is how to clear these obstructing eight narrow passages on the path of the yogi's mind:

- They are cleared by realization, in that having cleared the narrow passage of dualistic perception, the yogi abides in the stronghold of the view beyond duality.
- Having cleared the narrow passage of thoughts, the yogi abides in the stronghold of nonthought.
- Having cleared the narrow passage of viewpoints, the yogi abides in the stronghold beyond viewing.
- Having cleared the narrow passage of accepting and rejecting, the yogi abides in the stronghold of nothing to be rejected.
- Having cleared the narrow passage of a perceiver and something perceived, the yogi abides in the stronghold of transcending perceiver and perceived.
- Having cleared the narrow passage of hope and fear, the yogi abides in the stronghold of awakened mind evidently seen in oneself.
- Having cleared the narrow passage of clinging, the yogi abides in the stronghold of transcending something to grasp and hold.
- Having cleared the narrow passage of effort and achievement, the yogi abides in the stronghold of spontaneous perfection.

Thus, by abiding in these eight strongholds, everything is brought together within awakened mind so that every type of narrow passage is cleared without accepting or rejecting. Since he or she clearly sees that everything is mind, the narrowness of hope and fear is removed and the spacious, wide-open domain is reached.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: How does one discern reliable experiences?

The master replied: Experiences are deemed reliable if they can

be verified by three measures. Once you have understood the above points, they are realized by gaining trust in the experience of sublime statements, pith instructions, and your own intelligence.

Moreover, after having gained such a deep trust within yourself, as you continue the training, your experience becomes clear in that your body feels light, your mind becomes lucid, you can see what is concealed, you have very few thoughts, and so forth. Continue without conceit, hope, or fear so that, even when the signs of progress naturally appear, you will no longer indulge in any boastful euphoria.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: How are sidetracks and extreme beliefs eliminated?

The master replied: One should not follow in the tracks of these eight and nine types of beliefs.<sup>30</sup> Do not follow the tracks of the nine vehicles or those of the six classes of beings together with the extremist views of permanence and nothingness. When training in meditation, the yogi should not regard objects and mind as being separate, suppress interdependent phenomena, cultivate emptiness, or cultivate any duality or the like.

None of the nine gradual vehicles should become a fixed stance. The six classes of beings are not transformed perceptions but are ordinary positions. The extreme views of permanence and nothingness are distorted beliefs. The yogi is simply dharmata when he or she avoids following any of these beliefs and instead remains free of bias and prejudice.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: Which key point makes one naturally free of attachment?

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30. The eight types of beliefs are those of the six classes of beings together with the extremist views of permanence and nothingness. The nine are those of an intellectual understanding of the views in the nine vehicles.

The master replied: The key point that appearances are self-display and naturally dissolve through nonattachment. Appearances appear as the display of your awakened mind. As this is the case, when attached and clinging, see that your attachment is to no real object. Let the thought bloom and the attachment will then naturally vanish. Appearances are self-display, their emptiness is a natural emptiness, and any attachment clears just like air does.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: What defines the difference between the nine vehicles?

The master replied: The differences between the nine vehicles are defined by the presence or absence of the following beliefs:

- The position of the *shravakas* is to believe that while objects and mind are different, objects are made of atoms and atoms of material substance.
- *Pratyekabuddhas* believe that while external objects are illusions, these illusions are unreal since they are interdependent, but the mind that perceives them is real.
- The Middle Way position is that interdependent phenomena are emptiness and emptiness is devoid of conceptual constructs.<sup>31</sup>
- In the first of the three outer tantras of Secret Mantra, one gains realization by believing that everything ultimately is emptiness, while relatively it is pure in being the three families.
- In the next, one realizes through a view like the higher and a conduct like the lower, while using practices based on both.<sup>32</sup>

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31. The *Lama Gongdü* version adds: "The Sutra followers agree that all phenomena ultimately are emptiness, while relatively they are like magical illusions."

32. The three outer tantras of Secret Mantra are the Kriya, Upa, and Yoga tantras. Since Upa has no view of its own, it uses "the view of the higher," which is Yoga Tantra, and "the conduct of the lower," which is Kriya Tantra.

- In the last, one realizes the body of the deity by accepting and rejecting the four mudras<sup>33</sup> and samadhi.
- Among the three inner tantras of Secret Mantra, Mahayoga holds that phenomena ultimately are nonarising, while relatively they are magical illusions, known as the fourfold equality and the triple purity.<sup>34</sup>
- Anu Yoga regards the cause to be the nature of pure space, while the effect is the wisdom mandala, and that the child of great bliss is when wakefulness realizes this basic space that is complete as the mandala of male and female deities; moreover, it is cultivated as complete without being developed.
- All vehicles up to and including Anu Yoga do hold positions and have attachments, but Ati Yoga has neither position nor attachment.
- What does it mean that Ati Yoga is without position or attachment? It means that, since it is clearly seen from the beginning, the awakened state is not presumed to be manufactured. Due to not being attached to any conceptual thing, it has no attachment.

You do not see the higher or lower levels in the vehicles unless you discern these differences between them, so this is how you should distinguish the nine vehicles.




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33. The four mudras, or seals, are the Dharma seal, samaya seal, great seal, and action seal. They refer to four aspects of tantric practice and can be understood on various levels.

34. The main view in Mahayoga is great purity and equality of all phenomena—all of the world and all beings. The triple purity can refer to the fact that the aggregates, elements, and sense bases, or sights, sounds, and knowing, are pure and divine by nature. The fourfold equality refers to the fact that all phenomena are emptiness, unity of appearance and emptiness, beyond constructs, and equal in being of same nature.

These were the extremely secret instructions that the master Padmasambhava gave orally for the sake of people of the foremost caliber whose mind gate is protected by Shri Hayagriva:

- how to collect the key points all together so as to resolve the view by means of the nine analogies for the mind of spacious vastness
- how to determine the conduct by means of enjoying with unattached skill
- how to settle into the state of composure by means of three unimpeded states of endless vastness
- how it is taught, by means of analogies, that no fruition should be sought apart from experiencing whatever arises to be the nature of mind
- how thoughts can naturally dissolve by means of three ways of improvement that transcend improving
- how, by means of six analogies from the scriptures on self-liberated mind, no perceived object needs to be rejected since everything is clearly seen
- how six analogies for indivisibility explain how mind and dharmata are indivisible
- how six analogies for no sequence illustrate how all that appears and exists is original wakefulness
- how to clear away the eight hindrances and the narrow passages on the path of the yogi's mind and how abiding in eight strongholds brings the yogi's path into a single point
- how to trust the three measures and so to naturally produce experiences and signs of progress without boastful pride
- how to avoid following in the tracks of these eight types of beliefs<sup>35</sup>
- how appearances are self-display and naturally dissolve through nonattachment

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35. The eight types of beliefs refer, as above, to those of the six realms and to permanence and nothingness. Compare with note 29.

- and how the differences between the nine vehicles are defined by the presence or absence of beliefs

He explained all this for people of the foremost capacity by letting these teachings spontaneously flow from the expansive realization of dharmata.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus Master: I beg you to bestow a way for any person—whether of the foremost, average, or lesser capacity—to decisively settle the awakened state right now.

The master replied: The root of all phenomena is contained within your own mind. This awakened mind is present in every living sentient being. Moreover, it is the single sphere of dharmakaya and has neither shape nor color. It has no substance or material characteristics. It is present as a vast, empty knowing that is uncreated since the very beginning. To recognize this experience to be self-existing is known as *Samantabhadra of the view* or *the single sphere of dharmakaya*.

This single sphere—the dharmata that is awakened mind not made of anything whatsoever—is empty in essence and cognizant by nature. To simply remain in this continuous state is known as the *meditation that combines the realization of all buddhas*. To remain in this state—in which there is nothing to be cultivated nor anything to stray towards—is known as the *self-existing conduct beyond meeting and parting*.

Within this single sphere of dharmakaya, there is nothing that is not purified perfection; from the mandalas of conquerors above, to the hellish worlds below—all are equally purified perfection. Therefore it does not differ whether in painful states or the awakened state, nor between buddhas and sentient beings.

Moreover, this is not something that was just created, but rather has been spontaneously present from the very beginning, and

therefore the fruition dharmakaya is a self-knowing wakefulness. It is seen right now by means of your guru's instruction, and, as it is not something that can be cultivated or achieved, it is a purified perfection.

I have nothing to teach besides this, so keep it in your heart, Lady of Kharchen.



Lady Tsogyal, the Princess of Kharchen, requested from the master Padmasambhava these threefold meditation instructions for the benefit of people of foremost, average, and lesser capacity. She recorded them for the sake of future generations, and, since they were not to be propagated at that time, she concealed them as precious earth treasures. May they meet with the yogi endowed with the karmic destiny.

In future times, when you, the fortunate ones, meet with  
 these teachings,  
 Your realization of the view's nature may be like an ocean,  
 But still guard the relative cause and effect down to the  
 finest detail.  
 You may have understood the vast ocean of dharmata's  
 nature,  
 But still keep an undistracted training like a pillar of gold.  
 You may have realized the natural state of open mind,  
 But still protect your samayas and precepts, stable and  
 undamaged.  
 You may have gained a realization of the oceanlike  
 dharmata's nature,  
 But still respect sublime masters as you would the crown  
 of your head.



Your loving heart may be free of partiality,  
But still fulfill the wishes of your companions and all your  
Dharma friends.

You may have seen the equal nature of the buddhas and all  
beings,  
But still avoid like poison the ten unvirtuous deeds and  
their results.

You may have realized the fact that the buddha is your  
mind,  
But still regard the sublime yidam deity as dear as your  
own heart.

You may have understood that suffering itself is greatest  
bliss,  
But still avoid creating all its causes, actions, and  
involvements.

You may have transformed emotions into pristine  
wakefulness,  
But still avoid scorching your mind with flames of the  
three- and fivefold poisons.

You may have experienced nonaction as the state of  
greatest ease,  
But still exert yourself in goodness with the utmost  
diligence.

You of future generations who claim to be meditators,  
If you keep a lofty view while your conduct is still crude,  
You risk remaining bound in the view of hedonists.  
If you profess emptiness while believing in nothingness,  
You risk straying into the nihilist extreme.

If you train by imprisoning your mind in thoughtless  
dullness,

You risk straying into the shravaka cessation.  
If you claim that all is mind while acting frivolously,  
You risk straying into the triple lower realms.

If you cling to the highest view while deriding other  
Dharma practices,  
You risk straying into the hellish states of endless pain.  
If you fail to seize the stronghold of unfabricated  
knowing,  
You risk straying into the six samsaric realms.

If you meditate while believing that the mind is  
permanent,  
You risk straying into the extreme view of the externalists.  
If you act as if you meditate while you haven't understood  
the mind,  
You risk straying onto a false path when you die.

If, after having entered Dharma's gate, the precious lamp,  
You fail to strive towards supreme accomplishment within  
a single life  
And instead continue worldly aims, so pointless and so  
tiresome,  
You risk straying where the Dharma and your mind are  
separated.  
Do not deceive yourself with unbalanced, foolish training,  
But endow yourself with all the wealth of true learning,  
contemplation, and meditation.

Thus he instructed.



"The *Precious Golden Garland of Meditation Instructions*" for the benefit of people of foremost, average, and lesser capacity was given in the Slate Valley at Red Rock on the eighth day of the Dragon Year's second autumn month.



## *The Cycle of Vital Points*

The Lotus-Born master of Uddiyana's realization was equal to that of the buddhas, and his body transcended birth and death. It was to this nirmanakaya that Tsogyal, the Princess of Kharchen, raised this question: Please pay heed great master, what is the dividing line between buddhas and sentient beings?

The master replied: Tsogyal, that which we call *buddha* (*sang-gye*) refers to the perfection (*gye*) of wisdom and compassion after unknowing is cleared (*sang*). A *sentient being* comes about because of failing to realize that unknowing is unknowing. So the difference lies in knowing or unknowing. When applying this to your stream-of-being, look into your thinking mind and see that this mind is empty and does not consist of any identity whatsoever. Seeing and realizing that its manifold wakeful aspect is self-display is the vital point of naturally purifying a sentient being into a buddha.<sup>36</sup> Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus Master: What is the dividing line between samsara and nirvana?

The master replied: *Samsara*, "circling," is to spin from one place to another. *Nirvana* is to have cut through this circling. When applying this in your own stream-of-being, see that the basic state of your mind

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36. The phrasing here is from the *Lama Gongdü* version, while the *Martri* version reads: "When you see and realize that the thinking in this way dissolves by itself. . ."

is a self-existence that never arises<sup>37</sup> and is untainted by flaws of materiality. When you see this, then there is no place to circle. Samsara being cleared, purified from the beginning, is called nirvana. This is the vital point of naturally purifying samsara into nirvana. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between unknowing and knowing?

The master replied: *Unknowing (marigpa)* is not to know the main substance of mind. *Knowing (rigpa)* is to see this basic substance of mind.<sup>38</sup> When applying this to your stream-of-being, look into this natural state, the basic substance of your mind that is lucid, quiet, and vividly awake. Simply seeing mind in this way is the vital point of naturally clearing the unknowing. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between mind and mind-essence?

The master replied: *Mind (sem)* is the formative thinking. *Mind-essence (semnyi)* is free of thinking and mental doing. When experiencing this essence to be your stream-of-being, interrupt your mind's thought activity and let it be, uncontrived and as it naturally is. This quiet and vividly awake state, free of any mental doing, is the vital point of naturally clearing the mind itself. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.




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37. In another source text, Shri Singha defines *Ati* as “nonarising self-existence.”

38. Shri Singha says, “Knowing (*rigpa*) is the knowing of the original wakefulness that is personal experience.”

Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between all-ground and all-ground consciousness?

The master replied: In *all-ground* (*kunzhi*), *all* refers to the moving thoughts that conceptualize, while *ground* is basic knowing that is mingled with dharmakaya and therefore a vessel for good and evil habitual tendencies. *All-ground consciousness* (*kunzhi namshey*) is mind that stirs from the all-ground and arises as thinking. When applying this in your experience, let your uncontrived natural state, your true and basic nature, be undisturbed by thinking, but remain quietly, thought-free and vividly awake. Recognize that as the natural state in case of both the all-ground, the consciousness, and the basic nature of things. Therefore this is the vital point of naturally dissolving into dharmakaya. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between mind and mind consciousness?

The master replied: *Mind* (*yid*) is the basis for thinking, while *mind consciousness* (*yidkyi namshey*) is all the possible thought activity, the wind that puts it into motion. When applying this experientially in your stream-of-being, do not be stirred up with the wind that kindles emotion, but let mind remain free of thinking and not comprised of any identity whatsoever, just like the flame of a butter lamp when undisturbed by wind. Remain awake yet not forming concepts. This is the vital point of naturally dissolving mind and mind consciousness into the lucid nature of dharmata. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between the ultimate and the relative?

The master replied: The *ultimate* is that which transcends the domain of conceptual mind. The *relative* is that which uninhibitedly experiences, and the identity of which is any possible deluded state of mind. When applying this experientially in your stream-of-being, as you look into the relative, you see that the relative does not consist of any domain for conceptual mind, but rather, is empty while experiencing and is not made of anything whatsoever. This is the vital point of naturally dissolving the relative into the ultimate. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between this shore and the other shore?

The master replied: The term *this shore* refers to samsaric phenomena, the *other shore* to that beyond samsara. When applying this experientially in your own stream-of-being, look into the normal thinking mind belonging to this shore, and thereby see that it is utterly insubstantial, a cognizance that cannot be apprehended. This is known as *arriving at the other shore* and is the vital point of dissolving this shore into arriving at the other shore.<sup>39</sup> Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between dullness and wakefulness?

The master replied: *Dullness* is failing to comprehend anything, because of a dense mental veil. *Wakefulness* is to vividly see the original, natural state as it is. When applying this experientially in your stream-of-being, look into this unknowing, uncomprehending mind itself—without questioning whether mind understands or not—and thereby

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<sup>39</sup> The phrase “arriving at the other shore” is a literal translation of paramita.



see that it does not consist of any identity whatsoever but is lucid and unobscured. This is the vital point of naturally dissolving dullness. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between love and hate?

The master replied: *Hate* is loathing another object; *love* is adoring another object. When applying this experientially to your own stream-of-being, look into the object that triggers hate and see that it is empty, devoid of any identity whatsoever. Look into the object that provokes compassion and see that it is also empty and does not possess any identity whatsoever. Your hated enemy is mind, and your beloved friend is also mind. Understanding that this mind is empty and not made out of anything whatsoever is the vital point of naturally dissolving love and hate. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the difference between desire and delight?

The master replied: *Desire* is to be attached to and yearn for a certain thing. *Delight* is when joy is produced in the mind. When applying this experientially to your stream-of-being, look into the mind that feels desire, and see that the delight when beholding an attractive object or piece of property is just an experience of pleasure. Desire and delight are both mind. Since this mind does not consist of anything whatsoever, that is the vital point of naturally dissolving desire and delight. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between self and other?

The master replied: *Self* is an obvious clinging; *other* is a biased discrimination. When applying this experientially to your own stream-of-being, look into self and see that it does not consist of a self to which you can cling. Look into other and see that it does not consist of a one-sided category to which you can cling. Both self and other are mind. This empty quality of mind is the key point of naturally dissolving self and other without division. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between pain and pleasure?

The master replied: *Pain* is uneasiness of mind, while *pleasure* is mental ease. When applying this experientially to your stream-of-being, look into the painful state of uneasiness and see that it does not consist of any concrete substance but rather is mind. Mind is empty, and this empty quality is a state of ease—this is the vital point of changing pain to ease. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between good and harmful actions?

The master replied: *Good* is any action that is wholesome, while *evil* is action that brings unwholesome karmic ripening. When applying this experientially to your stream-of-being, all karmic actions and their ripening are one within the state of awakened mind, and this mind is, from the beginning, untainted by the virtues of wholesome actions or the flaws of unwholesome actions. Since this empty mind does not accumulate karmic ripening, this is the vital point of turning harmful actions into goodness. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between the mind of buddhas and that of sentient beings?

The master replied: The *buddha-mind* never moves from the essential nature, while the *sentient being's mind* is in movement. When applying this experientially, let this sentient being's mind with its thought movements be uncontrived, its basis not composed of any identity whatsoever. That is the original, natural mind, the state of great self-existence, and is known as remaining in the buddha-mind. This is the vital point of dissolving a sentient being's mind into the buddha-mind. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between gods and demons?

The master replied: A *god* is someone who has abandoned all ill will; a *demon* is someone who retains ill will. When applying this experientially in your stream-of-being, the perception of gods and demons is itself your thinking mind. Look directly into this very thinking and see that it does not have any concrete identity but is empty. In that moment, the thought of gods and demons is interrupted; hence this is the vital point of naturally dissolving gods and demons. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between an enemy and one's child?

The master replied: An *enemy* is someone who is seen as adversarial, while *one's child* is someone treasured with affection. When applying this experientially in your stream-of-being, look to your right and see the enemy; look to your left and see your child; look into your mind

and see that it is this mind that sees someone as an enemy and also this mind that regards someone as your child. Look into this dualistic perception and see that it consists of neither basis nor concrete substance. The insubstantiality itself is the vital point of naturally dissolving the notion of enemy. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between valuable and worthless?

The master replied: *Valuable* means something regarded with neediness and attachment; *worthless* means to be uninvolved in neediness and attachment. When applying this experientially in your stream-of-being, look right and see gold; look left and see filthy muck. The attachment to gold and aversion to dirt are both in your mind. Gold and filth are equal since this mind is primordially empty and has no concrete substance. That is the vital point of realizing that gold and dirt are no different. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between the perceiver and the perceived?

The master replied: The *perceived* is to regard external material objects as real; the *perceiver* is to misapprehend the mind within as real. When applying this experientially in your stream-of-being, look at externally perceived objects and realize that appearances are empty in themselves. Look into the inner perceiving mind and see that mind is intangible and empty. Realizing this is the vital point of realizing that perceiver and perceived are indivisible as an appearing emptiness. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between accepting and rejecting?

The master replied: *Accepting* is to mentally embrace without rejection; *rejecting* is to mentally discard. When applying this experientially in your stream-of-being, acknowledge that samsara's suffering is dualistic mind. Understand its futility, and be free from the urges of worldly pursuits. By turning your mind away from samsara, you are freed into not needing anything whatsoever. Thus, to realize this absence of something to accept or reject is the vital point of naturally dissolving accepting and rejecting. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between thinking and nonthought?

The master replied: *Thinking* is to ruminate and to ponder. *Nonthought* is the absence of mental doing, to remain so that thought movements dissolve by themselves. When applying this experientially in your stream-of-being, no matter which type of thought arises, neither reject nor modify it. Instead let it naturally clear, free of mental fabrication. As it has no concrete identity, no trace is left behind. This is called bringing thinking to the vital point of nonthought. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between the accumulation of merit as cause and the accumulation of wisdom as the effect?

The master replied: *The cause*—the accumulation of merit—refers to development stage, recitation and chanting, paying respect and offering tormas, giving, discipline, patience, perseverance, and so forth. *The effect*—the accumulation of *wisdom*—refers to the trainings in concen-

tration and in insight within the basic nature of emptiness. No matter what you train in, the vital point of perfecting merit as the wisdom effect is to seal it with the total absence of conceptualizing the doer and the deed. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between shamatha and vipashyana?

The master replied: *Shamatha* is when thought activity totally subsides and your attention remains unmoving; *vipashyana* is when you vividly see the nature of dharmata all at once. When applying this experientially in your stream-of-being, after you have settled into dharmata's nature of equality, you vividly experience emptiness, the nature of things, in whatever you see and whatever you think—this is called the vital point of realizing nondual shamatha and vipashyana. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the difference between means and knowledge?

The master replied: *Skillful means* is to be ingenious and discerning, while *knowledge* is to know and see reality. When applying this experientially in your stream-of-being, your mind's nonarising nature—its emptiness not comprised of any identity whatsoever—is discerned by using skillful means, while it is known and seen by means of knowledge. This is the vital point of realizing nonarising emptiness and knowledge of dharmata as indivisible. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between composure and postmeditation?

The master replied: *Composure* is to settle your body, speech, and mind in equanimity, to calm your restless attention and stabilize this calm. *Postmeditation* is, after rising from composure, to put the just-mentioned principle to use and further enhance it. When applying this in your stream-of-being, during composure you train in all things being free of constructs like space. For the ensuing understanding during the four types of daily activities, you train in appearances being beyond thought constructs. This is known as the vital point of realizing the nonduality of composure and postmeditation. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between space and wakefulness?

The master replied: *Space* is the nature of mind, the pure essence of dharmata revealed to its depth. *Wakefulness* is the knowing that this space is within you. When applying this in your own stream-of-being, the nature of mind—the true dharmata that does not consist of any materiality—is pure and hard to fathom. To see this dharmakaya by means of self-knowing wakefulness is dharmata revealed to its depth. To remain in its continuity is known as having brought space and wakefulness to the vital point of realizing indivisibility. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between dharmas and dharmata?

The master replied: The *dharmas* are wholesome phenomena, unwholesome phenomena, and neutral phenomena—everything that can be described and indicated in this way. *Dharmata* means that they are all empty in essence, empty by nature, and empty of characteristics. When applying this experientially in your stream-of-being, dharmata is to re-

alize that all phenomena arise from this mind that is emptiness. This is known as the vital point of realizing the nonduality of dharmas and dharmata. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between the view and the viewer?

The master replied: The *view* is undistorted buddha-mind; the *viewer* is a sentient being's mind. When applying this experientially in your stream-of-being, the view is not elsewhere. The view is an unbiased and vast pervasiveness, free from center and edge, so let your mind-essence be uncontrived. While your mind looks into that, do not regard it as other, but instead as primordially present within you. That is to realize the vital point of nonduality of viewed and viewer. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between meditation and meditator?

The master replied: *Meditation* is to place yourself in the uncontrived, natural state of thought-free dharmata; the *meditator* is the yogi's mind. When applying this experientially in your stream-of-being, relax body and mind into the unfabricated state of your ordinary mind-essence, and let be in the self-existing, self-cognizant state that is unspoiled by thoughts. Since no separate trainer can be found in this state, it is known as the vital point of realizing meditator and meditation as indivisible. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between conduct and application?



The master replied: The *conduct* is whatever you do; the *application* is to employ all your actions to further your practice. When applying this experientially in your stream-of-being, embrace whatever you do—walking, moving, lying down, sitting, and so forth—with the guard of mindfulness. Do not get caught up in [mindless] routines. Embrace your conduct and its application with dharmata. This is known as the vital point of realizing conduct and application as indivisible. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between the fruition to be attained and the attainer?

The master replied: The *fruition to be attained* is the three kayas; the *attainer* is the mind that intends to realize them. When applying this experientially in your stream-of-being, the three kayas are not elsewhere. The nature of mind and the nature of things being empty and indivisible is dharmakaya. Experiencing this as unconfined cognizance is sambhogakaya. The play of awareness manifesting in manifold ways is nirmanakaya. Recognize that the fruition to be attained is present within you rather than as something to be accomplished elsewhere. That is known as the vital point of realizing the fruition as present within you right now and not an object to be attained. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



Lady Tsogyal asked the Lotus-Born master: What is the dividing line between the samayas to be observed and their observance?

The master replied: The *samayas* to be observed are the root and branches and so forth; their *observance* is to guard your body, speech, and mind against damaging them. When applying this experientially in your stream-of-being, the samayas to be observed and their observance—all the roots of body, speech, and mind, together with the

four major branches—are nothing other than the continuous nature of your mind. To recognize this flawless mind is known as the vital point of realizing the samayas. Tsogyal, this advice of utmost importance, I give to you.



When I, the girl Tsogyal, of a lesser mind,  
 Beseched the Lotus-Born, a nirmanakaya master,  
 Respectfully with body, speech, and mind,  
 I received this advice, the explanation of the vital points.

For people in the future, I wrote them down in script.  
 Being unsuitable for dissemination, I hid them in a  
 treasure.

May they meet the destined one, possessing the karmic  
 links,  
 And purify his veils so that he gains the stage of  
 knowledge-holder.



This was the essential advice of vital points, the sealed cycle of entrustment that I wrote down on Juniper Ridge of Crystal Pearls in the Year of the Hare Child's twenty-fifth day of the third summer month.

SEAL OF TREASURE. ॐ

SEAL OF CONCEALMENT. ॐ

SEAL OF ENTRUSTMENT. ॐ

## *Advice on Combining Development and Completion, the Practices With and Without Concepts*

King Lhasey asked the master Padmasambhava: Great master, I beg you to give us a pointing-out instruction for combining practices with and without concepts.

Having said this, he offered a mandala of gold and accompanied his request with a feast offering. The master then gave the following instructions.

OM AH HUNG

Here is the instruction to recognize that three syllables are the great seal of Body, Speech, and Mind:

Wherever you stay is the retreat place, the mountain of your body. Here lives your mind, the hermit-meditator.

At first, visualize yourself as the yidam deity, complete in an instant's recollection. Recognize that the vivid presence of the deity's bodily form is sambhogakaya, with its color, implements, adornments, and attire. Recognize that its bodily form is nirmanakaya, seen yet insubstantial and not of material substance.

While you visualize this, recognize that your mind is not myriad thought formations but is dharmakaya, and that it remains lucid and thought-free like the flame of a butter lamp unmoved by wind.

Recognize that this visualized deity is not found anywhere other than in your mind seen to be the deity's identity.

Then consecrate this deity with the blessings of Body, Speech, and Mind. Recognize that the white OM, visualized upon a four-spoked wheel at the crown of your head, is the identity of the Body of all sugatas. Recognize that the red AH, visualized upon a four-petaled lotus in your throat, is the identity of the Speech of all sugatas. Recognize that the dark blue HUNG, visualized in the center of a vajra cross in your heart center, is the identity of the Mind of all sugatas.

Recognize that this deity of Body, Speech, and Mind, vividly present as the great mudra, spontaneously perfect since the beginning without being sought for, is the identity of the awakened state. Recognize that to train after acknowledging this is the cultivation of all buddhas by cultivating a single yidam deity. Recognize that its bodily form, when vividly present, is subject to neither decay nor decline, and is beyond birth and death. These were the pointing-out instructions for the great seal of Body.

Now I shall give the pointing-out instruction for the three syllables of Speech. Recognize that the white OM at the crown of your head is the identity of the sugatas' Body, the AH in your throat is the identity of their Speech, and the HUNG in your heart is the identity of their Mind. Recognize that the OM purifies the bodily obscurations of all the sentient beings of the three realms, the AH purifies those of their speech, and the HUNG purifies those of their mind.

Three signs of accomplishment result from having purified the obscurations of body, speech, and mind:

- Bliss arises in your body through accomplishing Body by means of OM, so recognize this as the blissful dharmakaya.
- Ability arises in your voice through accomplishing Speech by means of the AH, so recognize this as dharmata's sound of audible emptiness.

- Realization arises in your mind through accomplishing Mind by means of HUNG, so recognize this as dharmadhatu's thought-free presence.

A triple ceaselessness occurs once these [signs] are vividly present:

- The OM is the inhalation of breath and appears from the crown of your head.
- The AH is the breath remaining in between, which appears from your throat.
- The HUNG is the exhalation that appears from your heart center.

Recognize these three syllables, ceaseless as the inhalation and exhalation of your breath, to be the vajra recitation. This was the pointing-out instruction for the three syllables of Speech.

Now I shall give the instruction to point out Body, Speech and Mind: Recognize that OM, the identity of nirmanakaya, is your present mind with its myriad thought formations. Recognize that AH, the identity of sambhogakaya, is your naturally present awareness, cognizant and unconfined. Recognize that HUNG, the identity of dharmakaya, is your mind that is unconstructed and not made out of anything whatsoever.

Moreover, since OM is the identity of nirmanakaya, recognize that it is the *conduct*—to experience in all possible ways by being free from attachment to myriad things. Since AH is the identity of sambhogakaya, recognize that it is the *meditation*—to be present while not clinging. Since HUNG is the identity of dharmakaya, recognize that it is the *view*—boundless great bliss utterly free from craving.

Recognize that OM, the identity of nirmanakaya, is the arising of thoughts as dharmata because the movements of thoughts and memories dissolve in themselves. Recognize that AH, the identity of sambhogakaya, is meditation beyond sessions and breaks because this identity manifests as the naturally aware dharmata. Recognize that

HUNG, the identity of dharmakaya, is the view of groundless dharmata free from straying. This was the pointing-out instruction for the threefold Body, Speech, and Mind.

To combine these instructions into one point, regard your body as nondual appearing emptiness, visible yet insubstantial; your speech as the three syllables; and by clearly uttering them in your mind, they are nondual empty knowing. To possess these three points is the combination of the practices with and without concepts. Great King, they will make you attain buddhahood without fail, so take them as your daily practice. I swear that I, Padma, have no instruction superior to this.



By receiving this instruction, the king was overjoyed. He bowed down and then scattered gold dust.

This was the instruction on combining development and completion.

## *Instruction for Women on Attaining Enlightenment Without Abandoning Daily Activities*

The great master known as Padmasambhava, untainted by a womb, was born miraculously from a lotus flower. The mighty king of Tibet invited him to the Snowy Land. After he had tamed the land for Samye, he resided at the Juniper Ridge of Crystal Pearls. It was at this occasion that seven extraordinary women—Lady Tsogyal of Kharchen, Lady Diamond Lake of Shelkar, Lady Splendid Worship of Chokro, Lady Matingma of Dro, Lady Jewel Crest of Margong, Lady Sparkling Light of Chim and Lady Mati of Ruyang—arranged a golden mandala, the size of one cubit, with turquoise flowers as the seven royal possessions.

After they had made a feast offering with rice wine and a variety of delicacies, they made this request: Great master, please listen. Share with us your flawless physical presence, your pristine voice, and your mind that transcends all conceptual constructs.



Lady Tsogyal, the Princess of Kharchen, addressed the Lotus Master in this way: Please bestow an instruction for awakening to enlightenment in this very life, while in a female body, for a woman like me who is not very intelligent and is dim-witted, uneducated, and narrow-minded. Please give an instruction that is easy to understand and remember, and which is simple to grasp and realize.

The master then instructed her with these words: Princess of Kharchen, listen here. The true nature of dharmata is not an object that the mind can grasp; it has no dimension and belongs to no category. It is a nature that cannot be identified in any way whatsoever, and therefore does not need to be analyzed by the intellect. It is simply a matter of knowing the mind that is always present within you from the very beginning, so intelligence is not necessary. Forget about being clever, and simply remain.

This true nature is not within the domain of the intellect. Since it is a self-existing purity, nonarising and naturally present, there is no need to deliberately cultivate it. It is experienced simply as a natural presence; therefore it does not need to be held in mind, nor is it necessary to be sharp-witted. Just leave the intellect to itself.

The mind of equality is neither wide nor narrow. The buddha-mind and the mind of a sentient being derive from a single base, which is awakened mind. It becomes enlightened by realizing it, and one roams in samsara when not realizing it. The identity of this mind, which defies conceptual constructs, is a lucid brightness, a sheer emptiness made of nothing whatsoever, an unimpeded, vivid presence—that is the mind of a buddha. There is nothing you need to realize apart from it, so settle this issue by realizing it.

The nature of dharmata is not caught by names or writing, and therefore transcends the confines of conceptual constructs. This instruction has neither script nor text. There are no elaborate details to be discerned. As soon as you understand this it does not matter if you are dim-witted or uneducated—it does not require vast learning.

This is the realization you should settle on. This is also the great scriptural lineage. This will resolve the entire scope of learning and reflection. This is also what will let you awaken to enlightenment within this very life, before you leave the body. So, train in it.

Nevertheless, you women don't understand when it is explained; you don't see when it is shown; you don't listen when it is told; and



you can't keep secrets yet insistently ask for more teachings. While the Dharma is not in your hearts, you prance about as if it is. This teaching for women like you will hardly be successful, so don't deceive yourself, but give your practice the utmost attention.



Lady Diamond Lake of Shelkar then asked: Great master, hear me. For a woman like me of poor disposition, who is unable to practice with diligence, I request you to bestow an instruction for awakening to enlightenment though indolence.



The master then instructed her with these words: Lady of Shelkar, listen here. The nature of dharmata is naturally present in your mind, so it is fine to be indolent.

What is meant by the true nature of dharmata? It is this unconfined lucid wakefulness that is naturally present. It does not need to be sought elsewhere. When you recognize this mind of equality, self-existing and unceasing, it is fine to be indolent. Since every type of perception appears as the expression of this aware nature of mind, no matter which thought movement takes place, it arises from and dissolves back into the nature of dharmata, so original wakefulness is unceasing.

This nature to be realized is not something to be cultivated or accomplished, so it is fine to be indolent. Within such nature as dharmata, there is nothing whatsoever to be cultivated or achieved; it is present as your natural possession from the beginning. Every type of activity or effort binds you with the rope of ambition. There is no separate result to achieve by means of effort and striving. Let your mind of equality relax unsupported in the realized state of dharmata.

If you are able to be indolent after realizing this nature, that itself is the awakened state of a buddha. You will have no fear of further rebirth in samsara.

The master then instructed her with these words: Princess of Kharchen, listen here. The true nature of dharmata is not an object that the mind can grasp; it has no dimension and belongs to no category. It is a nature that cannot be identified in any way whatsoever, and therefore does not need to be analyzed by the intellect. It is simply a matter of knowing the mind that is always present within you from the very beginning, so intelligence is not necessary. Forget about being clever, and simply remain.

This true nature is not within the domain of the intellect. Since it is a self-existing purity, nonarising and naturally present, there is no need to deliberately cultivate it. It is experienced simply as a natural presence; therefore it does not need to be held in mind, nor is it necessary to be sharp-witted. Just leave the intellect to itself.

The mind of equality is neither wide nor narrow. The buddha-mind and the mind of a sentient being derive from a single base, which is awakened mind. It becomes enlightened by realizing it, and one roams in samsara when not realizing it. The identity of this mind, which defies conceptual constructs, is a lucid brightness, a sheer emptiness made of nothing whatsoever, an unimpeded, vivid presence—that is the mind of a buddha. There is nothing you need to realize apart from it, so settle this issue by realizing it.

The nature of dharmata is not caught by names or writing, and therefore transcends the confines of conceptual constructs. This instruction has neither script nor text. There are no elaborate details to be discerned. As soon as you understand this it does not matter if you are dim-witted or uneducated—it does not require vast learning.

This is the realization you should settle on. This is also the great scriptural lineage. This will resolve the entire scope of learning and reflection. This is also what will let you awaken to enlightenment within this very life, before you leave the body. So, train in it.

Nevertheless, you women don't understand when it is explained; you don't see when it is shown; you don't listen when it is told; and

you can't keep secrets yet insistently ask for more teachings. While the Dharma is not in your hearts, you prance about as if it is. This teaching for women like you will hardly be successful, so don't deceive yourself, but give your practice the utmost attention.



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The master then instructed her with these words: Lady of Shelkar, listen here. The nature of dharmata is naturally present in your mind, so it is fine to be indolent.

What is meant by the true nature of dharmata? It is this unconfined lucid wakefulness that is naturally present. It does not need to be sought elsewhere. When you recognize this mind of equality, self-existing and unceasing, it is fine to be indolent. Since every type of perception appears as the expression of this aware nature of mind, no matter which thought movement takes place, it arises from and dissolves back into the nature of dharmata, so original wakefulness is unceasing.

This nature to be realized is not something to be cultivated or accomplished, so it is fine to be indolent. Within such nature as dharmata, there is nothing whatsoever to be cultivated or achieved; it is present as your natural possession from the beginning. Every type of activity or effort binds you with the rope of ambition. There is no separate result to achieve by means of effort and striving. Let your mind of equality relax unsupported in the realized state of dharmata.

If you are able to be indolent after realizing this nature, that itself is the awakened state of a buddha. You will have no fear of further rebirth in samsara.

But, nevertheless, a woman like you cannot let go and cannot stay put. You always make elaborate plans for unnecessary activities and think not for an instant of the Dharma practice that is needed. When you set out to look into the nature of mind, you are unable to look for even a moment; instead you tirelessly keep an eye on your own looks, which is unnecessary. Without gaining strength in meditation practice, you give emphasis to pointless chatter, as ceaseless as drool from an old cow.

I haven't seen any success from teaching to such women. If you want to persevere, do so with further Dharma practice.



Lady Splendid Worship of Chokro then asked the master: Great master, hear me. For a woman like me, whose five poisonous emotions are strong, please bestow an instruction for awakening to enlightenment without having to reject these five poisons.

The master then instructed her with these words: Lady of Chokro, listen here. The five poisonous emotions are a natural possession within you since the beginning and therefore cannot be discarded by rejecting them. They are not transformed by transforming or purified by purification. Since these five poisons are of the nature of dharmata, they must be liberated where they are by dissolving naturally.

The identity of anger is empty. The very moment after anger has bloomed into a hell, there is nothing more for that anger to grow into, so nothing further is grown. The object of the anger is empty, so nothing grows from that either. Anger is empty of an individual identity and so has neither shape nor color, matter nor substance, and therefore dissolves in itself without having to be rejected. Anger causes no harm when it arises, and there is no benefit from it not arising. Anger naturally dissolves within the expanse of dharmata.

It is similar with desire, close-mindedness, pride, and envy—they are empty of locations and so have no origin; next, they are placeless

and have neither support nor substance; and finally, they are empty of identity, and consist of neither color nor shape. The five poisonous emotions dissolve where they are, leaving no trace. Original wakefulness consciously dawns. Thoughts are freed as dharmata. The rope of duality is cut.

When you practice after having realized this, whichever of the five poisonous emotions arises will dawn as dharmata. They need not be rejected. Original wakefulness does not need to be produced. This is the instruction in letting the five poisons be naturally liberated. When you practice in accordance with this principle, you cannot avoid attaining buddhahood.

Nevertheless, women like you ignite their minds with the five poisonous emotions. They drench themselves in unwholesome tendencies and indulge in their desires. Their craving for a man is like the raging winds of duality. Soiling and fouling, such women grasp at hoarding dust. Thinking not of the Dharma, but only of themselves, they are callous and unyielding. The five poisons hold the danger of running wild, so apply yourself to practice.



Lady Matingma of Dro then asked the Lotus Master: Great master, hear me. For a woman like me, who has many tasks and many distractions, please bestow an instruction for awakening to enlightenment without having to abandon activities.

The master instructed her in these words: Lady Matingma of Dro, listen here.<sup>40</sup> Dharmata manifests in countless ways, and everything is therefore the awakened state. To enjoy without clinging to any of the five sense pleasures is like enjoying a plate of food. Nonattachment is the way of a buddha's action.

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40. Alternate spellings for Lady Matingma of Dro are "Tingpangma" and "Mapema."

Since self-existing wakefulness unfolds from oneself, every recollection is wakefulness. Whatever occurs in your mind, do not follow it; let it clear where it occurs—that itself is the awakened state. It is like a water bubble that comes from the water and dissolves back into the water.

Spinning through samsara is impermanent; it has no substance whatsoever. No matter how you may circle through the incessant unfolding of birth, old age, sickness, and death, like magical apparitions, none of these have any substance, since they all occur from your own mind. Understand them to be magical illusions; they are experienced, and yet they are unreal.

The belief in a self is a delusion, so do not believe that an ego or a self has any substance. House and property, husband and children, wealth and belongings are all like objects in a dream; treat them like fantasies, since they are unreal and illusory.

All worldly activities are painful in nature. Like the thread from the silkworm's spittle, they unfold from you, and then they chain you. Whatever you do, give it the seal of no concept, and dedicate your actions as the accumulation of merit. If you practice in this way, every action you do becomes a dharma that leads to attaining buddhahood.

Nevertheless, simple women like you have little fortitude. Having physical enemies, you cannot practice the Dharma but are forced into marriage. Your bad karma involves you in countless tasks, so you never think of the Dharma. Very few women succeed in Dharma practice, so embolden yourself with perseverance.



Then Lady Jewel Crest of Margong asked the master: For a woman like me, who has unwholesome karma, please bestow an instruction for not having to be again reborn as a woman in the future.

The master replied: Lady of Margong, listen here. The awakened mind that is a self-existing knowing is not formed in the past, pres-

ent, or future; also, it is neither male nor female nor neuter and has no difference in quality. Its self-existing and self-arising natural presence, dharmata that does not arise, is free from death, transmigration, and destruction. In it, there is no dread of change.

Since the unfolding of thoughts from this mind is wakefulness, there is no need for effort or cultivation. Thought arises within it and dissolves back into it, like clouds in the sky.

Dharmakaya is present within you. Since it is never formed, samsara is pure from the beginning. It does not incarnate into a body. The play of dharmata is the nature of intelligent insight, and once you understand this, there is nothing inferior in being a female. While failing to know the nature of dharmata, being born as a mighty king does not stop samsara's flow.

In any case, nothing whatsoever can help you unless you realize dharmata that does not arise, just like no child can be born from a barren woman. Yet as soon as you realize the never-arising dharmata, there is also no need to take rebirth.

Nevertheless, women like you are not clever enough to practice the Dharma. You lack the armor of perseverance and cannot practice. Your timid intellect makes it difficult to show you the nature of dharmata; your weak fortitude prevents you from realizing it. Very few women succeed in Dharma practice, so try your best to endeavor and apply your mind to the practice.



Lady Sparkling Light of Chim then asked the Lotus Master: For a stupid woman like me, please bestow an instruction that awakens to enlightenment through a single phrase.

The master replied: Lady of Chim, listen here. From the beginning, your mind has been a self-existing natural presence that never arises and is primordially present within your stream-of-being. It is not something that needs to be re-achieved through effort. Since this

nature of mind is not a concrete thing, training in it means to cultivate nothing whatsoever. It is not an object to be cultivated, nor is there anyone to cultivate it.

Since your thinking is an original wakefulness, do not regard dullness and agitation as defects. Since they have no identity, your thoughts naturally dissolve and dharmata's natural presence comes to the fore. Dullness clears as it arises from and dissolves into this nature. Agitation also clears into basic space as it arises from this nature.

Since the fruition is not a thing that is achieved, it is enough to simply realize your own mind. Since your mind neither dies nor transmigrates, it is the single sphere of dharmakaya. Once you understand this meaning, the realization of the single cut, that itself is the awakened state of a buddha.

Nevertheless, fickle and suspicious women like you are incapable of following your master's advice with your rigid and incorrigible emotions. Only a few of you can reach the end of Dharma practice; but if you do practice, treasure your master's instructions. Be willing to face at least a little hardship.



Lady Mati of Ruyang then asked the Lotus Master: Since my diligence is weak, please bestow an instruction on nonaction.

The master replied: Lady Mati of Ruyang, listen to me. The nature of dharmata is not a concrete substance, and therefore is not something that can be produced. Since this dharmata nature is present from the beginning, it does not result from bowing down. The nature of dharmata is within you, present and unobscured. Once you realize that your mind has no identity, that itself is the awakened state. It is not something that needs to be achieved. All effort and striving merely chains you to craving. Let be, uncontrived and without meditating.

Nevertheless, senseless women like you don't understand, no matter how much you are taught. Even when dharmakaya is pointed out, you



don't recognize it. When introduced to the awakened state, you still don't see it. Even when taught, it is hard for you to realize the single cut of nonaction. Most of you will distort this teaching for women, so don a stronger armor and beware of being seized by the *mara* of taking a husband. Don't spawn children; instead practice in solitude, even though it is hard.



Once again, the Lotus Master gave the women some advice: Listen here, you faithful lady maidens. As your source of refuge, the most excellent is the Three Jewels, so exert yourselves in the methods for taking refuge. This life will be fortunate and will prevent you from being born in the lower realms in the future.

As your object of trust, the most excellent is your guru, so honor him as high as the crown of your head. This life will be blessed, and he will guide you along the path in your future lives.

As your place of worship, the most excellent is your yidam, so offer feasts and give tormas. This will fulfill your aims in this life and bring you prosperity in your future ones.

As your objects of honor, the most excellent are your parents, so serve and care for them. It will bring immediate benefit in this life and assure their help in the future.

As a companion, the most excellent is your husband, so value him as you would your own eyes. It will make this life virtuous and ensure a birth of good standing in your next.

Since women have the most control over immediate circumstances, be generous with your meals. This will ensure you amiable servants in this life and affluent food and wealth in your future lives.

Since they are karmic creditors from the past, make sure your offspring embrace the Dharma. This will help you in this life and help them in the future.



The Lotus Master then continued: Listen here, you lady maidens. The awakened mind of knowing is neither male nor female. Dharmata of self-existing wakefulness has neither lofty nor humble standing. Self-existing dharmakaya is neither high nor low. The nature of the single sphere is beyond increase and decrease. The buddha-mind lies beyond dimension. Things and their nature are not a duality.

Once you realize that your mind is the buddha, the buddha does not need to be sought elsewhere. Realize the nature of your mind and train in that. Venerate your guru and the Precious Ones and live in accordance with the Dharma to the best of your ability. Then, though born as women, you are both wise and magnificent.



The seven women attained realization and rejoiced in the master's words. They prostrated to him, circled him, and made a lavish feast offering. Lady Tsogyal, the Princess of Kharchen, out of consideration for future people, wrote his words down at that very time, at Juniper Ridge of Crystal Pearls.

SEAL, SEAL, SEAL. ‡

# *The Empowerment for Awareness-Display*

“THE EXPLANATION OF THE EMPOWERMENT FOR  
AWARENESS-DISPLAY” FROM  
*The Unimpeded Realization of Samantabhadra*

To Samantabhadra and Vajrasattva,  
To Prahevajra and Manjushrimitra,  
To Shri Singha and all the other masters,  
To the lineage masters of the three kayas, I pay homage.

The great master, bearing the name Lotus-Born, whose body is untainted by the flaws of a womb, whose radiant manifestation was born from a self-appeared lotus flower, is the victorious king of the wrathful ones, conqueror of the four maras, whose bodily form is like a vajra, unchanging and indestructible.

This mighty king, attainer of the marvelous supreme accomplishment, was invoked by the compassion of the dharmakaya buddhas and empowered by all the sambhogakaya buddhas. Then when all the nirmanakaya buddhas conferred together, he appeared as the regent of Buddha Shakyamuni on the Jambu continent that lies on the southern side of Mount Sumeru. He taught disciples in the eight great charnel grounds, served as the regent on the Vajra Throne of India, and, by the power of former vows, he arrived in the snowy land of Tibet causing the teachings of the Buddha to spread and flourish.

Later on, in the Cavern of Samye Chimphu, he conferred the four empowerments in completeness upon King Trisong Deutsen and Lady Tsogyal, the Princess of Kharchen. It was at this time that the king and lady saw wonderful signs and gained the warmth of practice, so that out of faith and devotion, they made this request: Please listen, great master. What is the meaning when, at the beginning, one is conferred empowerment with attributes and articles, including the vase, within the mandala of colored powder?

The master replied: Listen here, King and Lady of Kharchen. All the teachings of the truly and completely awakened ones are taught in three ways: expedient meaning, covert intent, and definitive meaning. Among these, the expedient meaning has the purpose of skillfully guiding sentient beings with incorrect perception to the higher realms. The covert intent is when a bodhisattva uses his ingenuity as a method for liberating beings from samsara's sufferings.

The definitive meaning has three progressive stages. As the fruition of all the teachings of the lower vehicles, the view of the Middle Way free of focus is to settle into a state free of limits. What the Sutra followers call *absence of conceptualizing* is to settle into the state that is free of perceiver and perceived. Up to this point there is no actual conferring of empowerment other than a mere sign or indication.

According to all the tantras of Secret Mantra, one is conferred the vase empowerment. To take the view of emptiness as fruition purifies the obscuration of karma, and to be given the vase empowerment opens up the doorway for the inner part of Secret Mantra, the five wisdoms that are indicated through words. Thus it is a symbolic empowerment.

This vase empowerment is the very first empowerment. It enables you to purify the obscurations of disturbing emotions, opens the door for the profound teachings, and is the occasion for being empowered to cultivate the yidam deity and practice the *sadhana*. Its result is to

become capable of mastering everything belonging to the vessel and its contents.

Thus he spoke.



Again they asked: Please listen, great master. At the time of the secret empowerment, why does one need to train in the channels and winds?

The Master spoke: Listen here, King and Tsogyal. Within the *dharmadhatu* of Akanishtha, the dharmakaya and sambhogakaya and that which we call the mandala of wisdom experience do not consist of a material body, so they have no channels based on the self-existing body of wisdom but rather a sphere of the five lights of natural radiance. They have no karmic winds but are endowed with the four wisdom winds. Their bodily form is unchanging; their speech is unceasing; and their minds remain in the unmoving state of equality. For them, there is no need for the secret empowerment, since means and knowledge are nondual.

In the nirmanakaya, even though it has a physical form that is like a magical illusion, the wisdom channel has great strength, and the wisdom wind has great force. So the nirmanakaya has no defilement of disturbing emotions. Thus it turns into a wisdom body by simply being shown the symbolic secret empowerment.

In sentient beings, who have a form produced through ignorance, the channels of disturbing emotions have great strength, the karmic wind has great force, and the wisdom channels and winds require skill to be found; therefore, it is most important to train in the channels and winds. When one has trained, ignorance subsides into a latent state and the channels of disturbing emotions become refined; and when the karmic winds are purified, the entire body becomes the wisdom mandala. Therefore, this training in the channels and winds is very important. Training in the channels and winds while in the human body transforms it into the wisdom body.

In the three lower realms, the wisdom channel and wisdom wind lie latent so that there is no path of liberation. The bodies of most animals face downward, and therefore they have the channels and winds for being dull and mute. The bodies of most hungry ghosts are horizontal, and therefore they have the channels and winds for craving. The bodies of most hell beings are head-down, so they have the channels and winds for agony. Therefore, beings in the three lower realms are not suitable vessels for the pith instructions.

In the human body, a quarter of the channels and winds belong to the wisdom type, so persevere in training your channels and winds!

Thus he spoke.



Again they asked: Please listen, great master. At the time of being conferred the wisdom-knowledge empowerment, what is the meaning of promoting the pure essence-elements?

The Master spoke: Listen here, King and Tsogyal. The meaning of wisdom-knowledge is that the karmic winds of disturbing emotions are purified by training the channels and winds, so that the winds move evenly within the empty channels, which gives rise to the experience of emptiness. That is called knowledge.

At that time, there are various methods for promoting the essence elements, such as relying on nutritious food, wearing soft, warm garments, using the enjoyment of beautiful ornaments, making use of auspicious gemstones, and keeping a gorgeous companion. By means of these, one should, just like a spring flowing forth in any dry valley, exert oneself in the methods that promote the pure essence-elements.

Without letting it dissipate like water in a bad place, one should instead, like letting the water flow together to fill a nice pool from which one can irrigate the four directions, guide the pure essence-elements upward. This will block the channels of disturbing emotions, sup-

press the karmic winds, and advance all the channels and winds of wisdom.

The indestructible *bindu* of the life force in the heart center supports the wisdom mandala. When leading the pure essences, it will promote all good qualities so that your body is full of color and radiance, your voice speaks in a way that produces joy, and your mind becomes serenely free of thought. At that time, if you connect this with profound pith instructions, the stage of no return requires no effort. Even if you leave it to itself, when passing from this life, you will take rebirth in the Realm of the Thirty-three Gods.

In this way, you become capable of the actions and activities that bring forth wisdom by means of the bindus. If the yogi who practices this path of the wisdom-knowledge empowerment does not possess empowerment and practice, he will not perfect the qualities of the path and levels.

Thus he spoke.



Again they asked: Please listen, great master. Please explain in detail the meaning of pointing out that the nature of one's mind is dharma-kaya, when conferring all four empowerments in completeness.

The Master spoke: Listen here, King and Tsogyal. In general, all the experiences belonging to samsara and nirvana are the unity of appearance and emptiness, while the empty quality is predominant. This entire world—above and below and in the cardinal and intermediate directions—is within the empty expanse of space. In between, the earth, mountains, and rocks all perish and become empty in the end. The phases of the moon and the changing of the four seasons are also signs of being empty.

All sentient beings and life-forms are born and die as well. Compared to the beings who obtain a physical body, a great many more don't have one. Moreover, attaining nirvana means being liber-

ated within the dharmadhatu space of emptiness. In this way, everything becomes empty, and so, all that appears and exists is the state of emptiness. Therefore, do not be attached and do not cling to duality. Without being attached to anything whatsoever, remain in the continuity of the great all-pervasive state of realizing emptiness that belongs to no category whatsoever. Let be in the state that is free from mental constructs.

Be certain that emptiness is the essence of most teachings. From the very beginning, that is the special quality of the intended view. If you fail to understand the meaning of emptiness, you will involve yourself in clinging to the perceived objects of the six collections and continue to roam in samsara. If you gain certainty about the nature of emptiness, you interrupt samsara's stream, and delusion is completely purified. On the other hand, if, rather than true emptiness, you stray into the idea of emptiness, or fail to understand the state of equality and instead dissipate into a state of indolence, there is no straying more severe than such mistaken emptiness. Rely therefore on a master for the key point of profound instructions, and persevere in the practice.

Thus he spoke.



Again they asked: Please listen, great master. Please explain to us in detail the meaning of conferring the most supreme among all empowerments—the empowerment to awareness-display—as well as the key points of practice and the meaning of gaining mastery over awareness.

The master spoke: Listen here, King and Tsogyal. One undertakes the four empowerments mentioned above progressively. One journeys through the levels and paths in succession and is not able to awaken instantaneously. The teachings on the gradual path are taught by the nirmanakayas for the sake of sentient beings.



The empowerment for awareness-display is taught by the buddhas who are by nature spontaneously perfected and, sending out compassionate emanations from the dharmadhatu of Akanishtha, they teach it for the sake of instantaneously awakening those who are of the highest fortune. It is therefore not possible to attain buddhahood without having received the empowerment to awareness-display.

All the buddhas of the past awakened after receiving the empowerment to awareness-display. Everyone who presently attains enlightenment also awakens after receiving the empowerment to awareness-display. And every buddha who attains enlightenment in the future will also awaken after having received the empowerment to awareness-display. It is impossible to attain enlightenment unless you have obtained it.

SAMAYA. ॐ SEAL, SEAL, SEAL. ॐ



## *Signs and Levels of Progress*

FROM PADMASAMBHAVA'S *Great Single Cut of Complete Liberation*  
REVEALED BY RINCHEN LINGPA.

Homage to the blessed wisdom deity of awareness.

Without these signs and levels of progress on the path  
That surely show when results have been obtained,  
In Great Perfection's innermost and total freedom,  
You are no different from an ordinary person and your  
practice is wasted.

Since your diligence wanes when signs of practice fail to  
appear,

This text describing them is of utmost importance.

My child, here are the signs of the path

For the person who trains in dharmata.

When a person practices with perseverance, there are two types of signs of the path, indefinite and definite, which indicate that the result will be swiftly attained. The indefinite are known as basic signs and appear due to one's previous connection, even without having practiced. As they are unreliable, I will not describe them here.

The definite signs appear due to practicing, and they are of two types: temporary and unchanging. The temporary signs can appear in

actuality or as moods. The first kind occurs when doing the preliminaries and the separation practices and your body feels at the brink of collapse like the walls of a house in shambles, your voice feels worn out like when exhausted, or you convulse like someone possessed. These indicate that you have separated samsara and nirvana. The moods are disenchantment with the samsaric body, speech, and mind. They indicate having purified the obscurations of the three realms and separated from samsara. Their absence indicates not having gained experience, so repeat the practice.

The actual signs—based on the fatigue of body, speech, and mind—are that your body is blissful; your voice wants to speak out; and your mind experiences everything as space. You feel, “Now nothing exists!” as well as compassion for beings who fail to realize the same as you; and enthusiasm for the Dharma will also arise. As moods, you forget that you have a body, you don’t notice your breathing, and mentally you don’t want to part from the state of nonthought, thinking, “This is it!” These are the signs of having taken hold of the nirvanic type of mental stability. Their absence indicates not being well trained, so exert yourself and continue.

All these are only temporary signs; they change and are not reliable.

Next are the signs of the main practice, namely the signs of having established rigpa in actuality through the view. The actual signs are feeling disenchantment with body, speech, and mind in a way that is visible to both you and others, and also having no interest in the activities of this life. Your voice is like that of a mute. Mentally, you are tired of samsaric affairs; you feel a profound devotion for your guru, and a compassion for all beings wells up so that tears flow. There is trust in the consequence of actions, and you exert yourself in giving up misdeeds and practicing virtue. The mood signs include lightness of body, at times even forgetting that you have a body, not noticing your breath’s movement, and mentally feeling that everything is insubstantial and evanescent. All these signs change and don’t last.

The signs of lasting value are the following. Within the expansive space of the view, when awareness is utterly laid bare, without fluctuations, and doesn't project experience as being "other," that is the sign of having anchored awareness within dharmata. The mood signs of having understood this are that, no matter where your attention moves, you understand and realize that it is your own mind, you see that thoughts are projected and return as self-display, and you understand that they are completely insubstantial like space. These are the signs of having established, through the view, that appearances are mind.

To recognize this even while dreaming is the sign of having reached the fullest degree of steadiness. If you sustain this, in seven years you will awaken to the state of nirmanakaya with the vanishing of your material body. If you do not recognize while dreaming, you will awaken at death. Therefore, to persevere in the practice is the conduct of the foremost type of person.

Now come the signs of experiencing the state of realization in actuality. In your body, speech, and mind, the actual signs are that your body is light and energetic, your voice is clear and able to express teachings you have never even heard, and at times your mind has some degree of clairvoyance. You see everything lucidly as rainbows, sometimes full of bodily forms and circles, sometimes becoming void and without reference points. As devotion to your guru grows even deeper and your concern for karmic consequences becomes more relaxed, you feel that your body emits light, at times your body is absent, your voice speaks unintentionally like an echo, and your mind is clear and blissful and does not project anything; now and then it turns void and forms no thoughts. All these occurrences change and cannot be relied on.

The unchanging signs are the following. There is no longer any experience in which you cling to a solid reality; instead, everything is sheer luminous display. Everything appears, but there is no solid reference point or clinging. To realize this is the sign of having es-

tablished, through experience in training, that mind itself is empty. To experience this even while dreaming is to have reached the fullest degree of steadiness. If you sustain this, in three years the material body will vanish and you will awaken to the state of sambhogakaya's intangible wisdom body.

Next comes the sign that this emptiness is spontaneously and effortlessly liberated in itself. Regarding body, speech, and mind, the signs in actuality are that there is no attachment to a body, such as being unafraid of water. Moreover, previously unseen marks of excellence can be witnessed by both you and others.<sup>41</sup> Your voice can express beneficial Dharma teachings by simply directing your will toward others. In your mind untainted clairvoyance arises.

The signs as meditation moods are that you neither remember nor even think of clinging to your body, speech and mind; that whatever you experience is spacious and not taken as real; and that you feel as if you can move freely through rock, mountains and the like.

The unchanging signs are the following. No matter what you experience, there is neither any conceptual focus nor any attempt to accept or reject. Rather it is liberated without being assumed to be real, so that, whether day or night and without needing to remember it, appearance and emptiness are naturally liberated into nonduality. That is the sign of having established self-liberation through spontaneous conduct.

When the delusion of dreaming ends, you have reached the fullest degree of steadiness. If you sustain this, in one year the material body will vanish and you awaken to the state of dharmakaya without remainder.

Then, the sign that this self-liberation is brought to consummation, the fruition of spontaneous presence, appears only in others' per-

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41. The marks of excellence refer to the thirty-two major and eighty minor marks of excellence which beautify the body of a supreme nirmanakaya buddha.

ception, whereas in your personal perception, all kinds of signs and indications of progress on the path have ceased. This state, known as *the vision of exhaustion in dharmata*, means that the moving force of appearances has ceased, while the still quality of emptiness is no longer. Thus, the nondual nature of appearance and emptiness neither fluctuates nor changes in any way whatsoever. Instead there is a naturally awake quality that transcends meeting and separation—an unfabricated presence, an absence without any dismantling—which is an utterly naked state of aware emptiness free of clinging. In others' perceptions, since an unobstructed knowledge—original wakefulness as an all-pervasive capacity—is also present, there is an effortless unfolding of form-bodies (*rupakayas*) for the welfare of beings.

Accordingly, as the basic nature of things is all-pervasive, unless the signs on the path of self-existing wakefulness have reached their fullest degree, there is no understanding of when the time of the spontaneously present fruition has arrived and the practice becomes smug and lazy. This manual of signs and levels of progress is therefore of utmost importance.



Without it, your attachment to emptiness is no different from that of the general vehicles.

With it, the fruition will quickly be reached to fulfill the aims of you and others.

Through Vajrasattva's blessings, it arose in Prahevajra's heart.

He accepted Shri Singha, who then entrusted it to me,  
Padmasambhava.

May it meet with a worthy person of karmic destiny.

Hide it from an unworthy person with wrong views.

When a suitable recipient appears, bestow the ultimate lineage.

The scripture lineage has the seal of strictness.

*Ema*, this amazing, sublime teaching,

The quintessence of mind terma, concealed in Ludü's  
belly,

Is entrusted to the care of Gönpö Nagpo, Palchen, the  
dakinis,

And to the wrathful *dharmapalas*, teaching guardians, and  
treasure lords.

Safeguard it; be sure you protect these teachings!

SAMAYA. ༄ SEAL, SEAL, SEAL. ༄

SARVA MANGALAM. ༄



## *Advice on Attaining Enlightenment at the Moment of Death*

Once again, at this same time, the king prostrated himself and made circumambulations around Padmasambhava. Then he asked the master: Great master, I am a king of little faith but of great wealth and fame, and [am surrounded by ministers who are] opposed and hostile to the Dharma. I am not a good person, but rather evil. I am fond of diversions and enjoyments and not spiritual in the least. I am only keen on the things of this life and do not even fear the prospect of going to the lower realms in the next life. Please take pity on me! I beg you to bestow upon me an instruction for attaining enlightenment at the time of death.

After saying this, he bowed his head with great devotion and wept. The master considered him and, extracting his most essential advice, bestowed the following: *Emaho!* It is most wonderful that you have faith felt from the bottom of your heart. Your Majesty, do not be fearful of the time of death. I have an instruction for the short path of Secret Mantra, by which even a great sinner can attain enlightenment before others. It is an instruction for avoiding the bardo, so listen here, Your Majesty.

First, we entered the womb due to the incidence of our unknowing and by the power of karma. Next, we remain for a short time on this earth. In the end, we will die and this body will lie on the ground while the mind travels on by the force of karma. The mind will as-

sume another body among the six classes of beings, and so continue to roam samsara.

Even if we succeed in living out a full life of one hundred years, we spend half of it by sleeping at night like a corpse. While dreaming, we undergo a multitude of joys and sorrows. So, at best, our waking hours add up to no more than fifty years.

Before we took birth from our mother, death was our natural possession. Yet, even so, people don't remember their death and engage in the various actions of passion and aggression as if they were immortal.

Death does not come at an announced time; when it will befall you is not certain. There are many ways to die, so the day will come when death is unavoidable.

Listen here, Your Majesty. There are three ways to die: superior, middling, and inferior.

- To die like a king is when someone like you dies still attached to his domain and possessions; that is the inferior way to die. At the moment of death, be free from attachment.
- To die like a beggar is to die without the slightest attachment to goods and utensils. That is the middling way to die. There is also the way known as dying like a mountain deer.
- To die in solitude, utterly free of even the notion of attachment or clinging, is the foremost way to die.

Listen here, Your Majesty. At the time of death, there are three ways to attain enlightenment.

- The person of lesser capacity has gathered the accumulations [of merit and wisdom] and attains enlightenment in the following life.
- The person of medium capacity has become familiar with the training and attains enlightenment in the bardo.

- The person of the foremost capacity has gained realization and awakens to enlightenment without going through the bardo.

This specific instruction is for attaining enlightenment without going through the bardo; it is the short path of Secret Mantra. I will teach you this root instruction in three points:

- Resolve the root of the identity of all outer perceived objects to be the identity of space. Thus you empty the outer six worlds and are free from the root of a birthplace among the six classes of beings.
- Resolve the root of the identity of the inner perceiver to be the identity of empty and cognizant mind. Thus you empty the womb-doors of the inner contents of beings and are free from the root of every type of rebirth.
- Resolve the root of phenomena by realizing that ignorance never arose. Thus you will be free from the root of good and evil.

This was the instruction in three points.



The king asked: Great master, how do I resolve the root of the outer perceived objects to be the identity of space? How do I become free from the root of a birthplace among the six classes in the outer vessel-like world?

The master replied: Your Majesty, listen here. What does “outer perceived objects” refer to? The present appearances include ten million times one billion worlds of Mount Sumeru with four continents. In our experience, they are seen as earth and the stones, mountains, and rocks, trees, plants, and forests. They belong to mistaken perceptions of unrealized beings.

The *Scripture of the Embodiment of the Realization* mentions:

Even the sole identity of a thing  
 Can be seen in six mistaken and one true way.  
 The erroneous are of two kinds.

Take for example water: gods see it as nectar, demigods as weaponry, humans as water, animals as drink, hungry ghosts as rotten pus and blood, and hell beings as boiling liquid copper. In reality it is none of these, thus there are six mistaken views.

Two perspectives are to be regarded as erroneous. Eternalistic extremists claim that cause and effect are both permanent, so that a man who dies is reborn a man, a horse again as a horse, and so forth. The nihilistic extremists allege that the body is assimilated into the four elements and that mind is assimilated into space, that present events are inconsequential, and that there is no rebirth after dying. Both of these are erroneous conceptions.

Well then, what is the actual case? It is that phenomena are nothing whatsoever and totally free of anything to be held in mind. As for these present appearances of stones and rocks, mountains and forests, trees and plants, and so forth, do not believe them to be anything at all, and do not assert them to be anything at all. Do not deny what appears, and do not assert them to be or not to be. Their appearance is a natural appearance, and their emptiness is a natural emptiness. Like the identity of space, let their identity be naturally empty, and let their appearance be devoid of a self-nature.

When you don't apprehend the appearance of these objects, you give rise to neither clinging nor attachment. Thus, you cut through the root of the outer vessel-like world. Being free of rebirth within the six classes of beings, you have emptied the six causes. Why is that? It is because the experience of the six classes of beings is a delusion. Being free of this delusion, the appearance of their objects will be nowhere to see.



The king asked: What is meant by resolving the root of the inner perceiving mind as the identity of empty cognizance?

The master replied: Your Majesty, listen here. Having resolved that the root of the inner perceiving mind is empty cognizance and having emptied the womb-door for the mind within is known as being free from the root of rebirth.

What is meant by “inner perceiving mind?” It includes [the mind within,] parents and companions, siblings and offspring, enemies and friends. Well then, what is the perceiver itself? It is the mind endowed with emotions. When resolving what it is, this mind cannot be proven to be anything whatsoever, nor is it a complete nothingness.

When not realized, this all-doing mind causes you disaster. When this mind—the thinker of disruptive thoughts—is realized and resolved, it is an unconfined cognizance. This is known as realizing mind-essence. That it cannot be proved to be anything whatsoever is known as dharmadhatu, the basic space of all things. Though cognizant, it is a cognizance that is unconfined. Though perceiving, it is an emptiness that cannot be proved to be anything whatsoever.

When you don’t apprehend perceived objects as father or mother, you have exhausted clinging (as the cause) and attachment (as the condition). Thus you have no fear of rebirth through the womb-doors of the six classes of beings.



The king asked: It is necessary to realize the nonarising of ignorance. What is meant by “*nonarising*”?

The master replied: To know that mind-essence cannot be proved to have any identity whatsoever and is totally free of constructed attributes is called *knowing arising as knowledge*. This is also called *recognizing oneself by oneself*. This is also called *realizing the truth of nonarising*. In fact, it is to be resolved about your true essence. Thus, you are free from the karmic phenomena of good and evil. No matter

how much good you have created, you are free of hoping for the result of buddhahood; and no matter how much evil you have done, you are free from fear of the lower realms and the hells. In that [realization], there is neither karma nor the ripening of karma.

This is not a fantasy, a belief, or a fabrication; it is affirmed in all the noble proclamations, as in the *Extensive Prajnaparamita*: “In that empty nature of all phenomena there is neither karma nor ripening of karma.” Furthermore, *The Hundred and Fifty Modes* states:

Just as the bright red lotus flower  
Is untainted by any impurity,  
The empty nature of all things  
Remains untainted by the defects of karma.

The *Great Expanse* mentions:

If it is subject to karma,  
It is not the self-existing wisdom.

The *Vajra Meru Mansion* states:

Self is devoid of self. Other is devoid of other. The “both” is devoid of both. The “neither” too is devoid of neither. The “neither” is devoid of boundlessness. This is because they are untrue and mentally fabricated.

The *Sutra Requested by Wisdom Ocean* states:

These Mahayana sutras are unlike the ways of the world. Why is that? It is because all sentient beings have no continuous duration.

This being so, when you recognize that everything is your mind’s delusion, you have resolved the nature of things and are free from the root of good and evil.



The king asked: Great master, how do I awaken to enlightenment at the time of death without going through the bardo?

The master replied: Your Majesty, listen here. The yogi of highest mental acumen does not apprehend outer perceived objects; therefore, he cuts through misconceptions about appearances, and, letting appearances dissolve in themselves, he experiences no perceived objects in the bardo. Thus an outer vessel-like world does not arise.

As inner perceiving mind has no identity that can be proved in any way whatsoever, samsara dissolves in itself. Having no mental body in the bardo, the womb-doors to the six classes of beings are emptied. Being free from causes for rebirth, dharmata dissolves in itself.

When this yogi leaves the body, he meets with the space of awareness. For him, the propelling force of good or evil actions is exhausted.



The king asked: Great master, how does the fruition of the three kayas manifest for such a yogi?

The master replied: Since the ground of dharmata lies beyond the domain of words and descriptions, the spacelike continuity that is no thing whatsoever is named the fruition of dharmakaya. Out of this spacelike continuity that is dharmakaya, the cloudlike sambhogakayas appear adorned with the major and minor marks within the experience of bodhisattvas on the ten levels. Like rain, the nirmanakayas benefit whoever needs to be inspired in whichever way is necessary by means of boundless emanations. The *Hidden Essence Tantra* mentions this:

Within the continuity of the empty sky,  
They take shape, like rain clouds.  
By showering down as rain,  
They nurture the greenery and forests.

Likewise, from the inconceivable dharmakaya,  
 The domain realized by the three yogas,  
 Appear the sambhogakayas,  
 The domain of the bodhisattvas of the greater vehicle.  
 From there appear the nirmanakayas,  
 The domain of all fortunate beings.

This is the way in which the fruition of the three kayas manifests.



The master concluded with this instruction to the king: Your Majesty, understand this. There is no time to squander! Train in experiencing this profound nature of dharmata! Even though you understand the profound meaning, do not stop performing conditioned virtuous deeds. Give whatever you do the seal of holding no concepts.

If you reveal this teaching to others, it will become a basis for misconceptions, so do not propagate it but conceal it as a terma. At the end of this age, King, you will meet with it again.



Thus Padmasambhava sealed this with his spoken command. The king was overjoyed, and at that very time, his awareness was liberated into its natural state. He was overwhelmed by gratitude to the master.

This was the short path of Secret Mantra, the instruction for a great sinner to awaken to enlightenment before others.



## *The Five Bardos*

NAMO GHURU.

The great master known as the Lotus-Born was not born through a womb but sprang from a lotus flower. Freed from the terrors of death and transmigration, he had cut the flow of birth and death. His realization was equal to that of glorious Samantabhadra.

It was this master whom Lady Tsogyal, the Princess of Kharchen, followed and served as attendant. Once, while staying at the Juniper Ridge of Crystal Pearls, she asked the master: Great master, sentient beings are caught in the four great rivers of birth, old age, sickness, and death because of failing to cross the bardo states. How many kinds of bardo states are there?

The master gave this instruction: Tsogyal, the sentient beings of the three realms of samsara have not cut through the bardo states, therefore they take rebirth and circle throughout the three realms.

During the five kinds of bardo states you should:

- Recognize the ultimate sphere during the bardo of this life, like a lost child reuniting with his mother.
- Clarify what is unclear by recognizing your nature during the bardo of samadhi, like a vain girl looking into a mirror.
- Connect habitual tendencies [with samadhi] during the bardo of dreaming, like the flow of a river.
- Continue experience during the bardo of birth and death, like reconnecting a broken water pipe.

- Connect with residual karma during the bardo of becoming, like lighting a lamp in a dark room.

Unless you cut through these five bardos, you will find no chance to sever the root of samsara.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: During the bardo of this life, how does one attain certainty in recognizing the ultimate sphere, which is like a lost child reuniting with his mother?

The master replied: To recognize the ultimate sphere during the bardo of this life is like when a lost child finds his own mother and he recognizes her to be his own mother. In the same way, recognize your own nature to be dharmakaya.

There are three means for attaining certainty in this:

- First, establish dharmakaya as the natural state through the unchanging empty essence.
- Second, establish wakefulness as the manifest state through unbiased personal experience.
- Third, establish original wakefulness as their nonduality through the great bliss of nonaction.

The first, [to establish dharmakaya as the natural state through the unchanging empty essence,] has seven qualities. To begin with, it is not produced by causes. Next, it does not perish through conditions, but is self-existing. Not created by others, it is insubstantial. Not a temporal occurrence, it is beyond permanence and nothingness.

The [second], wakefulness as the manifest state, has two aspects: the external manifestations of delusion and the inner manifestations of wakefulness.

How do the external manifestations of delusion arise? Out of the self-knowing state of awakened mind—the unfabricated natural state

that is like the sky—appear the clouds of craving and grasping due to ignorance. Owing to this incidence, one enters a womb and incarnates in a body of aggregates, hence the five elements appear and from that arise the five poisonous emotions. From these five poisons manifest the five types of illness that then cause one to die. By dying, one circles through the six classes of beings.

How do the inner manifestations of wakefulness appear? They appear as self-liberated, not held in mind, insubstantial, and free from clinging; hence ignorance dawns as awareness, the five poisons arise as the five wisdoms, and the five elements are in balance. By cutting through misconceptions about the five sense objects, you prevent clinging to the five bardos, recognize sickness and suffering to have subsided, turn the five negative forces into helpers, block the gates to the hells, and cross over the abyss of the six classes of beings, all at the same time.

The third point is to establish original wakefulness as nonduality through the great bliss of nondoing. You may wonder whether or not buddhas and sentient beings, nirvana and samsara, appearance and emptiness, have become separate. Buddhas and sentient beings have no duality of time as to before and after. Samsara and nirvana have no duality of identity as to good or evil. Appearance and emptiness have no duality in nature, since they are indivisible. They are therefore the great bliss of nondoing.

At this point it is important to be liberated through the pith instruction of the four liberations from clinging:

- Unbiased personal experience liberates you from the clinging of denigrating the extreme of emptiness.
- The unchanging empty essence liberates you from the clinging to the permanence of eternalism.
- Their indivisible unity liberates you from the clinging of alternating truth and falsehood.

- Their impartial ground liberates you from the clinging of abruptly falling into one-sidedness.

Here is the instruction of practicing through the sixfold recognition:

- Recognize appearances to be mind.
- Recognize mind to be empty.
- Recognize appearance and emptiness to be beyond duality.
- Recognize this nonduality to be great bliss.
- Recognize the great bliss to be nonthought.
- Recognize nonthought to be dharmakaya.

Now, here is the instruction of meeting with the dharmata mother through the sixfold sealing:

- Give appearances the seal of emptiness.
- Seal emptiness with appearances.
- Seal both of them with the nonduality of appearance and emptiness.
- Seal this nonduality with great bliss.
- Seal the great bliss with nonthought.
- Give nonthought the seal of unchanging dharmata.

Here is how to resolve through the instruction of the fivefold decision:

- Decide that dharmakaya is primordially present in yourself and therefore not something to seek or accomplish.
- Decide that pleasure and pain are dharmakaya and therefore not something to reject or accept.
- Decide that dharmakaya neither arises nor ceases and is therefore beyond cause and effect.
- Decide that it is beyond the reference points of “is” and “is not” and therefore not subject to exaggeration and denigration.

- Decide that it is uncreated and continually present and therefore not something to be produced by thought.

Now, the qualities of realizing the view are the following:

- You resume the natural abode of wisdom and meet your dharmata mother.
- Your conceptions naturally dissolve by recognizing the bliss of insightful action.
- You reach the natural perfection of knowledge.
- Your view is freed from limitations.

By resuming the natural abode of wisdom, no matter how much teaching you hear, you understand that there is no further enhancement than [the unity of] appearance and emptiness. Recognizing and understanding this to be none other than yourself, you come to know this to be nothing other than your own experience. By recognizing what is to be as it is, you meet your dharmata mother.

While objects for your eyes appear as visual forms, the moment you experience them free of clinging even though seen, your conceptions naturally dissolve. The moment you experience things in this way, original wakefulness, dharmata, and bliss are all found from within; and you comprehend the *bliss of realized action*.

This instruction in the view of great confidence is also known as the view of the unchanging offspring of the victorious ones, as the basis for delusion that identifies demons and thieves, as the instruction for verifying the beginning and end of samsara, and as the instruction for recognizing your mind's nature as being dharmata.

All these instructions in the view are like the example of a mother's single child who becomes lost and roams about. After the death of the child's father, the mother goes to another husband. Later, when the child is reunited with his mother, the mother recognizes her son and the son recognizes his mother. Similarly, at the moment of realizing

the nature of dharmata, you recognize that buddhas and sentient beings both, samsara and nirvana both, as well as appearance and emptiness both, are indivisible from the very beginning as the single sphere of dharmata. To definitively resolve this during the bardo of this life is the instruction in recognizing the ultimate sphere and the instruction for the lost child reuniting with his mother.

Thus he spoke.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: During the bardo of samadhi, how does one clarify the unclear mind?

The master replied: To clarify the unclear mind like a vain girl looking into a mirror is the instruction in meditation. For example, just like the vain girl inspects the mirror morning, noon, and night, the yogi should look into his mind and train during the three times.

For this there are two points: how to position your body and how to place your attention.

First, when doing a training session, keep your body straight and upright. Assume the posture of equanimity. Bend your head forward slightly. Lower your gaze to the angle of your nose-tip. Touch your tongue to your palate. Cover your knees with your hands. During daily activities, combine the [following instruction] with walking, moving about, lying down, and sitting.

Second, the way to place your mind is the great placement beyond something to be placed. In the continuity of realizing the view, leave your senses unbridled.<sup>42</sup> Leave body and mind without artifice; acknowledge without clinging. Recognize dharmakaya, but remain without holding it to be dharmakaya. Train in being unmistakable. Train for a long while. Train uninterruptedly. Train joyfully.

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42. "In the continuity of realizing the view" can also be phrased as "while the view is an actuality."

“Being unmistakable” means, in the continuity of realizing the view, to train in acknowledging what is while not giving rise to holding it as that. If this is so; it is the state of unwavering equality.

To accept what is means to acknowledge that there is bliss, wakefulness, thought-free awareness, and the play of wakefulness, while not holding that there is bliss, wakefulness, thought-free awareness, and the play of wakefulness. Thus, free of clinging, awareness that does not hold anything to exist naturally dawns.

There are six enemies<sup>43</sup> to this type of meditation training: dullness and agitation, [the four types of straying], and permanence and nothingness. If dullness occurs, to totally refrain from holding it in mind is known as the instruction in [dissolving] dullness and sluggishness into dharmakaya. If that does not happen, then continue to train while rousing your energy.

Agitation includes the very fear of being agitated, the thought “I must control this agitation,” “I must remain unperturbed,” and so forth. Once you recognize that the agitation is your own mind, it is known as sealing agitation within dharmata.

Failing to see something that is agitated—something that must be stopped, kept, or purified—and recognizing this to be yourself is known as bringing thoughts into dharmata. That is how to overcome thoughts.

If you cannot do that, here is the instruction in collecting the scattered state: simply train in placing your mind in the continuity of its uncontrived essence.

Moreover, while training, four kinds of straying will happen:

- Straying into flattened-out conception means that your mind strays into being oblivious.

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43. It appears that there is a discrepancy in the Tibetan here, as six are stated, but eight are actually mentioned.

- Straying into absentminded shamatha means your mind goes stagnant so that you are unaware of the nature of dharmata.
- Straying into a noticing frame of mind means you desire to maintain a state of not thinking.
- Straying into grating concepts means your mind remains troubled and withdrawn.

These are the four kinds of straying. To clear away their faults, do not direct your mind at any of these ways of straying.

Your essence is not permanent, since it is stamped with emptiness. It is not a nihilistic nothingness, since it is awake and unconfined. It is not something that becomes enlightened, since it remains as dharmakaya itself. There is no fear of [continuing in] samsara, since samsara is liberated into dharmakaya. Once thoughts are utilized as wakefulness and suffering dawns as wisdom, there is no thing to be purified.

When you know how to practice in this way, you are unmistaken. Train in prolonging this. Without interruption, train delightedly. Once you have trained in this way, your former tendencies to cling diminish. By the power of this training, clarity, bliss, and the feeling of having no body will occur.

Without this training, you will not cut through momentary deluded thinking, and you will not interrupt your former tendencies to cling. Therefore, train thoroughly in never separating your mind from dharmata, like a great banner unruffled by wind.

Furthermore, just like a vain girl looks in the mirror to see if there might be any blemish on her face, always train, by means of samadhi, in inspecting whether there might be any flaw of dullness or agitation in your view and conduct. This was the instruction for training in the bardo of samadhi.

Thus he spoke.





Lady Tsogyal asked the master: During the bardo of dreaming, how does one connect habitual tendencies [with samadhi], like the flow of a river?

The master replied: This is the instruction in the conduct. Like the example of an unceasing river, it is the instruction in mingling into one your present state of samadhi with the mind at the time of dreaming.

For this, there are three points:

- mingling by means of instruction,
- mingling by means of activities,
- and mingling by means of the elements.

First, for mingling by means of instruction, train in experiencing sleep as bliss and emptiness indivisible. This too has three points:

- Focus the awareness by drawing it in.<sup>44</sup>
- Focus the body by bending the four limbs.
- Focus both, during the swarm of habitual tendencies, by never separating the confusion of dreams from the experience of blissful emptiness. When uninvolved in habitual tendencies, never separate the experience of being asleep from the experience of meditation training.

When that is the case, you have mastered this bardo.

For mingling by means of the elements, when you first approach sleep, this dissolution is earth dissolving into water. When consciousness begins to go under, it is water dissolving to fire. During this time, train in blissful emptiness.

When consciousness has become hazy, it is fire having dissolved into wind. At this time as well, train in bliss indivisible from emptiness.

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44. Usually the advice is to combine with a focus inside one of the chakras.

When sleep has completely taken over, wind has dissolved into consciousness. At that time, train in the indivisible state of bliss and emptiness.

When there is tranquility without dreams, it is consciousness having dissolved into lucid wakefulness. That is the time when you remain as serene blissful emptiness, as the nonarising state free of thinking. When that is the case, you have mastered this bardo.

For mingling by means of activities, focus intensely on the intention that “I will recognize the dreaming as being dreams!” Also while practicing during the day, keep the notion of everything being dreamlike. Accept that all phenomena are dreams and that all pleasure and pain is delusion. Bring to mind the previous meditation experience.

Now, when your training has developed to the point where there is no difference between dreams and waking, then, since dreaming is similar to the bardo, you will be able to cut through the bardo states by having trained in the above meaning.

Moreover, just like the flow of a river is uninterrupted, continue the training without break during daytime, dreams, and at all other times. This was stating the instruction on conduct during the bardo of dreaming.

Thus he spoke.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: During the bardo of birth and death, how does one continue one’s remaining karma like reconnecting a broken water pipe?

The master replied: The instruction in continuing one’s remaining karma during the bardo of birth and death like reconnecting a broken water pipe has two parts—being reminded by another incidence and the realized one reminding himself.

The former is that one's master or Dharma friends give the following reminder:

Mind-essence neither takes birth nor dies; it is your own mind. While earth is dissolving, your body cannot support itself and feels heavy. While earth dissolves into water, your exhalations are protracted and inhalations withdrawn. While water dissolves into fire, your mouth and nose dry out. Your exhalations and inhalations are both brief. While fire dissolves into wind, your consciousness grows unclear. While wind dissolves into consciousness, your breathing stops. This is the time when you should remind yourself to support your attention. Thus, concentrate both body and mind so as not to be overtaken by circumstances.

So-called death is your own thinking. Though you part with the body of flesh and blood, mind is not something from which you can ever part. Remind yourself of the meaning of your former view and meditation training.

This is the time when, like reconnecting a broken water pipe, after the former moment has passed, the power of your training will reconnect you with the following moment.

That was the instruction on experience for continuing your familiarity with practice during the bardo of birth and death.

Thus he spoke.



Lady Tsogyal asked the master: During the bardo of becoming, what is the instruction in connecting with residual karma that is like lighting a lamp in a dark room?

The master replied: For this, if you are someone who has trained in a deity of Secret Mantra, you will appear in the form of the deity during the bardo and thereby attain the level of a Mahamudra knowledge-holder. If you are someone who has trained in the un-

mistaken nature of dharmata, you will recognize the thought-free state as being dharmakaya and thereby attain dharmakaya for yourself and others by manifesting as sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya to benefit beings.

Moreover, the bardo of becoming is similar to dreaming after having fallen asleep; when your breathing stops, your consciousness immediately arrives in the bardo. In this case, without changing the bardo state, your former tendencies make you think that you have a body, so that—unless brought to an ultimate realization—you fall into the abyss of the six classes of beings.

If you do interrupt the bardo, whether you bring a deity or dharmata to mind through the power of your training, you will blockade the cities of the six classes of beings. As you have no senses of flesh and blood, you will become whatever is brought to mind and thus disrupt samsara.

Like the example of lighting a lamp in a dark room, whenever the yogi's mind parts from his body, he will not remain in the bodily form of the previous life, but instead, the very moment his mind separates from the body, attain dharmakaya, which thus is known as *awakening to buddhahood in the bardo*.

Furthermore, the six superknowledges appear; the five disturbing emotions are abandoned and dawn as the five wisdoms; the 84,000 Dharma doors are simultaneously manifest; and you act for the welfare of beings through sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya. Just like lighting a lamp in a dark room, you will awaken to buddhahood in a single life, which is known as *the spontaneously perfected fruition*.



This was the instruction on the five bardos given by the master Padmasambhava to Lady Tsogyal. May it meet with the destined one with the kármic link!

It was written down at the Juniper Ridge of Crystal Pearls, on the second day of the last autumn month on the Year of the Snake.

SEAL OF TREASURE. 𠄎

SEAL OF CONCEALMENT. 𠄎

SEAL OF ENTRUSTMENT. 𠄎



# *The Treasure of the Lotus Crystal Cave*

## THE DIRECT INSTRUCTIONS OF SHRI SINGHA

When I, Guru Padma of Uddiyana,  
Was eight years of age, my faith awakened.  
I went before Guru Shri Singha,  
Offered gifts, and requested teachings.

My guru said, "Train your mind in the Tripitaka." Therefore, in the eastern direction of the Vajra Throne, I studied the sutras; in the southern direction, I studied the Vinaya; in the western direction, I studied Abhidharma; and in the northern direction, I studied the *paramitas*. Then I went before Shri Singha, offered gifts, and studied the entire Tripitaka.

I asked him to please accept me. My guru replied, "Son, you must first train your mind in the teachings of Secret Mantra."

Thus, in the country of Uddiyana, I studied the three yogas; in the country of Sahor, I studied Mahayoga tantra and the Mind Section of the Great Perfection; in the country of Nairanjara, I studied Kilaya; in the country of Singha, I studied Padma Maheshvara; in the country of Vasudhara, I studied Kriya; in the country of Nepal, I studied Yamantaka, in the country of Merutse, I studied Mamo; at the Vajra Throne, I studied the eight heruka sadhanas; and in the country of Lantsha, I studied Guhya Samaja, consisting of the four sections of father tantra and mother tantra.

Having realized all phenomena to be merely dreamlike, illusory, unreal, and false, I went before the guru who was expounding the Dharma to a gathering of 5,500 people, which included a number of kings. When I arrived, Guru Shri Singha said, "What do you want, novice?"

I replied, "I have studied the teachings of secret mantra extensively. Now I would like to receive teaching from you."

Guru Shri Singha said, "You are a learned man who has, first, studied the Tripitaka and, second, studied the Secret Mantra. Now let this gathering disperse."

Then he continued, "You understand that all phenomena are false, but this does not help anything. This understanding—that everything is dreamlike, illusory, unreal, and false—should be assimilated in your being. Without taking it to heart, it becomes mere platitude. This does not result in enlightenment."

I said, "If that is so, then please give me a teaching on taking it to heart."

The guru replied, "First, make a mandala offering!"

I made a mandala of one measure of gold dust and offered it to him.

Shri Singha said, "Now, remain in front of me. Keep your feet in the cross-legged position, your hands in equanimity, and your backbone erect. This is the key point of body.

"Direct your eyes towards the expanse of sky. This is the key point of the channels.

"Tighten your lower wind and suppress your upper wind. This is the key point of wind.

"Visualize an E from a red bindu in the *nirmanā-chakra* at your navel center. Visualize a white bindu from a BAM in the *mahasukha-chakra* of your crown center. This is the key point of bindu.

"Focus your mind on the BAM being melted by the blazing fire from the E, after which the white and red bindu mingle together in the *dharma-chakra* of your heart center. This is the key point of mind.

"Let the white and red bindu become smaller and smaller, and fi-



nally, do not keep anything in mind whatsoever. This is the key point of perfect and complete enlightenment.”

I practiced in this way, and some experiences arose, such as no sensation of body, no sensation of the inhalation and exhalation of breath, the feeling of being able to move unimpeded through appearances, and the feeling that I was immortal. When these experiences occurred, I felt proud and related them to the guru.

The guru said, “It is extremely foolish to take pride in being touched by a master’s blessings and regard that as enough. Now go to a solitary place, and do not create any mental fabrications whatsoever.”

I went to a solitary place and for one year tried not to create any mental fabrications whatsoever. Some experiences arose, such as the feeling that “emptiness is appearance! Appearance is emptiness! Appearance and emptiness are indivisible! There is no duality regarding buddhas and sentient beings! There will be no evil deed committed even if I were to engage in unvirtuous acts! There will be no benefit even if I were to engage in the ten virtues!”

Regarding these as satisfactory, I related them to the guru. He said, “It is foolish to be satisfied with meditation experience.

“If you think that appearance and emptiness are indivisible, you should be detached from appearances. Are you?”

“If you think that buddhas and sentient beings are indivisible, you should honor and serve sentient beings to the same degree as you would the buddhas. Do you do that?”

“If you think, ‘I will have no karmic ripening even if I engage in the ten unvirtuous acts,’ you should be able to accept the ten unvirtuous acts of others directed towards you—even if it might result in your death. Can you do that?”

“If you think, ‘Even if I were to engage in the ten virtues, there would be no benefit,’ you should not have any sense of joy when you are benefited by others who are practicing the ten virtues—even if your own life is saved. Do you?”

“Now, go again to a solitary place, and let your body remain like a corpse, let your voice remain like that of a mute, and let your mind remain like the sky.”

I then went to a solitary place and practiced in that way, whereby eight experiences arose:

- an experience of clarity, utterly lucid without any inside or outside, manifesting as wakefulness and emptiness without difference, whether my eyes were open or closed
- an experience of emptiness, totally open and empty with no clinging to inside or outside and with the mind not dwelling on anything whatsoever
- an experience of bliss, which was like melting butter and became totally free and exhilarating, with no thought of having a body or a mind
- a state without clinging to various sense perceptions, yet still tainted by absentmindedness
- a state of wakefulness being like the sun shining in the sky
- an experience of the body being like mist, lacking both object and substance of physical action
- a feeling of recognizing neither self nor others
- a feeling that all sentient beings must be aware of the meaning of mind-essence to the same extent as I

Delighted with these experiences, I related them to the guru. He said, “There are three occasions in the Great Perfection: the occasion of spontaneous presence, the occasion of inconceivability, and the occasion of great bliss. Of these three, your experiences are the occasion of spontaneous presence. After having remained in freshness, the inconceivability and the great bliss will manifest.

“Samsara is beguiling and the mind is gullible! Do not be attached to meditation experience, but expand your mind.”

“How is one supposed to expand one’s mind?” I asked.

Guru Shri Singha replied, “There is no difference between buddhas and sentient beings other than their scope of mind. What is called mind, consciousness or awareness, is of a single identity. The mind of a sentient being is limited; the mind of a buddha is all-pervasive. So develop a scope of mind that is like the sky which has no limit to the east, west, north, or south.”

I then went to a solitary place and developed a scope of mind that was like space, whereby these convictions arose:

- “This mind without any projection or dissolution of thoughts, remaining exactly as it is placed is an utterly one-pointed wakefulness and emptiness. This is precisely what is called one-pointedness.”
- “This mind is a complete absence of clinging to substantial things—a total openness with mind not dwelling on anything whatsoever. This is precisely what is called simplicity.”
- a feeling of, “What else can there be? In whatever way I look, it is the same! There is nothing to abandon or accomplish! This is precisely what is called one taste.”
- a feeling of, “What else is there to search for? This is it whether one meditates or not! There is nothing whatsoever to practice! There is no thing to be cultivated through meditation! This is precisely what is called nonmeditation.”

I then had the powerful experiences of understanding:

- There cannot be anything beyond this!
- The two form-bodies (rupakaya) originate from dharmakaya, so these manifold manifestations of sights and sounds are like a flame and its light!
- There is no preceding impulse for the inhalation and exhalation of breath!

- Without creating anything, manifold expressions still manifest!
- This is unchanging like the essence of space!
- Not even the slightest dualistic mind is occurring!
- This is exactly it!

I had experiences of feeling vivid clarity, total purity, complete openness, all-pervasiveness—utterly encompassing, totally free, and completely diffused. The experience of clarity felt like the sun rising in the sky; the experience of emptiness felt like space; and the experience of bliss felt like an ocean. I had a variety of experiences that felt like the waves on the ocean or like the clouds in the sky.

When these occurred, I related them to the guru. Guru Shri Singha said, “The natural condition of things is devoid of something to be experienced. So what are you experiencing? What is it that experiences? What are you so elated about? I myself do not experience anything. Have you achieved something superior to that?”

“Your experiences are an achievement that differs from that of the buddhas of the three times. Fixating on having an experience should be recognized as being seduced by Mara.

“All your experiences are contrived and result from fabrication. They will still come and go. They will not enable you to face difficulties. They are but a blanket of good concepts; you have not untied the knot of conceptual thinking. It is like having a latent sickness within. You might be blissful at present, but it will not help. Since you have not penetrated to the core, the zombie of confusion still walks around.<sup>45</sup>

“If you regard meditation experience as paramount, you cannot resolve the view while submerged in concepts. If you allow yourself

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45. Another version of this text is found among the collection of terms revealed by Rigdzin Gödem under the name *Dzogchen Rangjung Rangshar*. This version differs here by reading: “You have not yet captured the throne of stability, so the smoldering ember of delusion will still burst forth into flames.”

to become fascinated by a fraction of samadhi—thinking that there is nothing higher—and regard it as the perfection of samadhi, you will not cut through the activity of conceptual thinking. You will not exhaust the layers of meditation experience, and the dirt of ignorance will not be purified.

“For each meditation experience, there is a temporary fascination. Perceiving them to be the only truth, you have become obscured. By obscuring the reality that is utterly free from attachment and transition, the instance of attachment and transition has turned these blissful results of yours into nothing but straying.

“If you cling to clarity and regard it as the highest, you will achieve the highest state in the realm of form. If you cling to the emptiness experience of nonthought and regard it as the highest, you will achieve the highest state in the formless realm. If you cling to bliss and regard it as the highest, you will attain nothing but the highest state in the realm of desire. However, none of these will result in attaining unexcelled enlightenment, the supreme *siddhi* of Mahamudra.”

“If that is so, how should I train?” I asked.

“Bring forth your original mind, and then come back to see me!” he replied.

“Well, into what should I put effort?” I asked.

“All your effort should be put exactly into effortlessness!” he answered.

“How should I practice samadhi without effort?” I asked.

“Noble son, do not hold temporary experiences to be the highest; do not cling to them. Do not watch objects, and do not watch the mind. Do not get involved in a lot of things, and do not give rise to desires. Do not harbor needs, and do not entertain despair. Leave your mind exactly as it is. Let your mind rest like the center of space,” he said.

I then went to a solitary place and practiced exactly as he told me to. My previous experiences became nothing but layers of concepts and

were completely extinguished. I realized natural mind, totally unobscured by any defects or virtues—utterly free from a basis of anything to be meditated upon or anything to cause confusion. I realized that if this natural mind were cultivated, nothing whatsoever would be produced; and, if not cultivated, there would be no confusion. I realized it to be natural mind devoid of any defect—naked and vivid wakefulness. Realizing this utter openness, totally fresh, the same taste of all the phenomena of samsara and nirvana, I related this to the guru.

The guru said, “The original nature, the uncompounded dharmakaya, is exactly this pure and naked natural mind devoid of something to be cultivated or something which causes confusion. Now, do not obscure yourself with further craving! Bring the old craver to the state of desirelessness!

“By sustaining a state known as *never cultivating and never apart, never separated from the nature beyond cultivation*, you will attain the supreme and common siddhis. Now, is there anything else bothering you?”<sup>46</sup>

“There is nothing bothering me as I have no faults or regrets concerning my samaya,” I replied.

“Are you displeased?” he asked.

“I am just a little displeased,” I answered.

“If you are displeased, you have hope. If you are pleased, you have fear. If you have hope and fear, you have dualistic clinging. That will hinder the nondual wisdom of great bliss, the undefiled fruition. Without thinking this is either a fault or a virtue, stick to the practice of nonduality. From now on, just continue without coming back to see me!”

I then practiced in the town of Uddiyana and did not have the slightest thought of asking for teachings, of offering my experience, of

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46. The other version here reads: “Now, you and I will never meet again!” I said, ‘I still wish to see you and ask for teachings.’ ‘Will you be delighted to see me and unhappy if you don’t?’ ‘I will be overjoyed if I could just meet you again!’”

virtue or nonvirtue, or of good or evil. I simply went wherever I went and sat however I sat. I became just like a corpse.<sup>47</sup>

Then the guru arrived and said, "Aren't you going to prostrate to me? Aren't you going to present your realization to me?"

"This is not *not* prostrating, and I do not have even a tip of a hair's worth of understanding to offer you. It is now like the trace of a bird flying in the sky," I replied.

The guru said, "That realization cannot change; do not abandon it! Without separating from that realization, go wherever you wish. Keep your conduct in accordance with the Tripitaka. Keep your meditation in accordance with Secret Mantra. Keep your view in accordance with the Great Perfection. Fulfill the aims of sentient beings like a wish-fulfilling jewel. Sustain numerous worthy disciples. Although you have no desires, always make offerings to the gurus, yidams, and dakinis. You will become one whom the eight classes of gods and demons attend like a servant." Saying this, he departed.

Thereafter, I took to heart the fact that all things are dreamlike and illusory and that the mind itself is beyond birth and death. I had visions of the deities of the eight heruka sadhanas, the eight classes of gods and demons became my servants, and I wandered through many Indian regions benefiting beings.

Later, when [King Trisong Deutsen was] building Samye, the eight classes of gods and demons were causing obstacles. I told them, "It is not good to make obstacles, for the king's intention is as excellent as gold!"

The gods and demons retorted, "Why don't you come here yourself, master."

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47. The *Dzogchen Rangjung Rangshar* version reads: "Like a corpse abandoned in a charnel ground, I was free from forming any judgments about whatever perception arose."

So I went in person to the Land of Snows, and on the way I met with the messengers.<sup>48</sup>

I, Padma of Uddiyana,  
 Followed Guru Shri Singha.  
 This, his final instruction,  
 Liberated me, Padma.  
 Though not liberated by the Tripitaka or Secret Mantra,  
 I was liberated by this secret teaching.  
 May all the worthy ones also be liberated through this.  
 May this final and direct instruction  
 Of Guru Shri Singha  
 Meet with a worthy person who possesses former training!

This is concealed in the Lotus Crystal Cave.  
 I entrust it to you, Shampo,<sup>49</sup>  
 In case an unworthy person comes.  
 There is no instruction like this in the world.

SAMAYA. §

SEAL, SEAL, SEAL. §

SEAL OF ENTRUSTMENT. §

SEAL OF SECRECY. §

ITHI. §

48. The messengers of King Trisong Deutsen who were sent to invite Padmasambhava to Tibet.

49. Daklha Shampo is one of the native spirits of Tibet who pledged he would guard Padmasambhava's treasure teachings.



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