

# Dzogchen Series



LOTSAWA HOUSE

DHARMA. ON THE HOUSE.

# Advice for Palseng

by Dodrupchen Jigme Tenpe Nyima

*I bow respectfully to the guru, Drimé Özer,  
And, with folded hands, pay homage.  
Here, a tiny droplet of instruction from  
The omniscient guru, I shall now explain.*

On the subject of what we call 'mind' (*sems*) and 'pure awareness' (*rig pa*), some common scriptures say that all that is 'main mind' is mind, while cognition is what is 'clear and aware'. They thus claim that mind is synonymous with consciousness (*rnam shes*), while awareness is synonymous with cognition (*shes pa*). Yet such explanations are insufficient when it comes to identifying mind and awareness as they are spoken of in the Dzogchen texts.

In Dzogchen, mind is the root of saṃsāric existence and includes a tendency to cling to things as real; while pure awareness is the wisdom of settling evenly in accordance with intrinsic reality (*dharmatā*). What is more, this is not like the mere common view of the Middle Way; it is superior because it brings about a special kind of certainty through the reasoning that proves how the buddhas' insight into how things are is present as the perfect ground of ordinary beings' basic nature. On an ultimate level, both true existence and the absence of true existence are understood to be equal, and all theoretical posturing is therefore overcome in the face of ultimate reasoning. In terms of the conventional, this approach is superior because it incorporates the practice of viewing all phenomena as infinite purity.

This Dzogchen approach is also superior to the outer mantra vehicles, as it incorporates the profound key point of seeing phenomena as buddha-forms and wisdom, then settling, without contrivance, in the great natural condition. It is also superior to the vehicle of the transcendent perfections because it involves viewing phenomena as infinite purity. And it is superior to the outer mantra vehicles, because even though these tantras have deity yoga, they do not have the view which recognises that, in their natural state, these appearances have always been enlightened as buddha-forms and wisdom. It is also more profound than Mahāyoga and Anuyoga, because there is no need to train in the generation and completion stages, both of which involve effort. Instead, since all phenomena are recognised as primordial enlightenment, and the radiance of pure great wisdom, it is sufficient simply to abide by a recognition of this, relaxing in the nature of the ground.

This differs from the approach taken by some contemporary meditators, those who merely settle in delusory perception without cutting attachment to reality at its very root, and without realising the nature of infinite purity.

More details on how the nature of the conventional is buddha-forms and wisdom, or how ultimately both pure and impure are alike in lacking true nature, as well as proofs of how appearances are infinite purity and so on, can be found in the works of the omniscient Rongzom and victorious Longchenpa.

In short, I wonder whether alternating in meditation between analysis, for as long as certainty about these points has not yet arisen, and settling, when certainty has arisen and does not wane, might not be an authentic means of sustaining this understanding.

Any foolish, mistaken analysis,  
Or foolish talk, triply invalid,<sup>1</sup>  
In what I have here set down  
Is due to me, the foolish one.  
Still, if anything here is of value,  
Take it as your own adornment.

*I, the youthful Jigme, wrote this in response to Palseng's request. May it be virtuous!*

| Translated by Adam Pearcey, 2015.

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## Notes

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1. *dpyad gsum ma dag pa*, i.e., invalid on three levels: 1) the apparent level, as it conflicts with what can be perceived directly; 2) the hidden level, as it conflicts with what can be correctly inferred; and 3) the extremely hidden level, as there are inconsistencies within the text itself. See "dpyad pa gsum gyis dag pa'i lung" in *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, vol. 2, pp. 1643–1644. ↩

# Memorandum on the Subject of Mahāmudrā and Dzogchen Instructions

*by Dongak Chökyi Gyatso*

The following is a reminder to myself.

The Mahāmudrā and Dzogchen instructions are not invalid. In fact, the ways in which they are valid become clear when we make a distinction between 1) teachings that apply more generally,<sup>1</sup> and 2) teachings that are intended for particular individuals.<sup>2</sup>

Regarding the latter, for those of exceptionally high capacity, the ways in which emptiness is introduced, as well as all the various modes of meditation, do not employ the general terminology of the great scriptural traditions of the two pioneering systems of the Mahāyāna. Instead, the teacher points out the way things are in connection with the mantra vehicle, in a state of ‘ordinary awareness’ which does not need to be modified or transformed. Moreover, this inexpressible natural state, free from evaluation, which is the meaning of what is pointed out, is sustained in a natural way. This approach thus unites the entry points to both the common practice of insight and the uncommon practice of taking clear light as the path. Therefore, even though these instructions are extremely powerful, this potency is dependent on the level of a student’s faculties, and it is crucial that they are not misapplied, as in the example of Devadatta eating medicinal butter.<sup>3</sup>

According to the approach that covers the teachings in general, it is of fundamental importance to teach from the beginners’ perspective so that there is no possibility of hindrance or going astray. This would include explanations of how the object of negation is to be identified in the beginning, how it is to be refuted through reasoning, and how insight is to be sustained through the alternation of analytical and settling meditation on the two types of selflessness, as discovered through the power of reasoning. In this approach, there are separate ways of practising meditation upon emptiness according to sūtra and mantra, each making use of particular methods related to their own level, and they are not brought together as one.

These days, however, if you consult followers of Mahāmudrā, Dzogchen and the like, they will not make even the slightest acknowledgement of instructions that suit people’s actual capacity, such as the way to progress in tranquillity and insight taught in the scriptural approach of the great pioneers. Instead, they will suggest that everyone should follow the path of Mahāmudrā or Dzogchen right from the beginning, and declare that anything else is not even Dharma. This only goes to show that the general approach to the teachings has become as inaccessible and remote as flesh-eating spirits!

Furthermore, among the learned followers of the great scriptural approach, those with the greatest knowledge of the Dharma deny any possibility of a distinction between general and particular approaches, and refute it, whereas those of lesser learning simply believe that Mahāmudrā and Dzogchen and the like are unacceptable, and regard schools such as the Kagyü and Nyingma as evil. Thus, with the existence of an approach tailored to particular individuals as unapparent as invisible flesh-eating spirits, serious dissensions have emerged.

So it is that as a result of degenerate views, attitudes are extremely immature and people lack the intellectual strength required to bear the weight of the Mahāyāna.

The teachings tailored to particular individuals are not only extremely effective, they can also be the basis for great confusion, and there are many who have been led astray, mistaking trinkets for jewels, while thinking they have chanced upon some treasure bequeathed by the great masters of the past.

There are no obstacles at all to the approach of investigating and coming to a conclusion with immaculate reasoning in the scriptural tradition of the scholars of India. Tracing back the lineage of this approach, you will find Maitreya and Mañjuśrī, and ultimately the perfect Buddha himself. Whatever you might think of this teaching, which we refer to as the Dharma, it is a gradual path to enlightenment combining all that is to be trained in by the three types of individual in a form that can be practised in a single session (or “on a single seat.”) I can not bear the thought that I might die without first planting the habitual seeds for such teaching. Yet, as the saying goes, “The Lord of Death does not wait to learn that all our tasks are complete.” So I must establish such habitual tendencies today, and, from now on, by reaffirming this each day, I shall strengthen the imprint on my mind.

From the very depths of my heart, I take refuge in the Kagyü, Nyingma and other schools. Yet I shall not practise, even in my dreams, any form of Sakya, Kagyü or Nyingma in which the scriptural tradition of the great pioneers is disregarded or abandoned.

Not only in this life, but in all my lives to come, I aspire especially to serve the teachings of the second Buddha, Tsongkhapa. Yet, even at the cost of my life, I shall never practise that form of Gelugpa which regards its own view as supreme and treats all types of individual as if they were the same, blanketing them all under a single approach to the Dharma or means of training.

In short, I shall always follow my supreme guide, the Lord of Dharma, who gained full realisation and mastery of all the teachings, and in the account of his liberation offered the following advice as his final testament: “Keep the eyes of your intellect directed upwards, and pay no heed to hollow proclamations of what is Sarma and what is Nyingma.”

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[www.treasuryoflives.com](http://www.treasuryoflives.com)

## Notes

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1. *bstan pa spyi btsan* ↔
2. *gang zag sgos btsan* ↔
3. On one occasion, when the Buddha and his monks fell sick in Śrāvastī, he was advised by the doctor, Kumārā Jivaka, to take twelve measures of powerful medicinal butter, while all the other monks were instructed to take no more than a single measure. Devadatta, claiming that he was of the same family as the Buddha, insisted on taking two measures, but nearly died as a result, and was only saved through the Buddha's miraculous intervention. ↔

# Vajra Verses on the Natural State

revealed by Rigdzin Jigme Lingpa

*Homage to the glorious Samantabhadra!*

The natural state of the ground is free from complexity,  
And ground-appearances are rigpa-dharmakāya.  
The path has always been clear of effort, from the very beginning.  
When this nature itself is made manifest, it is the great source of freedom.  
The fruition is not something separate and set apart.

When the result itself is present as cause,  
Settling completely is calm abiding (*śamatha*).  
Any sudden rising is rigpa's own radiance,  
And vivid awareness is insight (*vipaśyanā*).  
Directly, upon fading, there's primordial experience.

Remaining genuinely is the dharmakāya,  
Accompanying awareness is the sambhogakāya,  
And the non-duality of stillness and movement is the nirmāṇakāya.  
This is what we call the “three-kāya rigpa.”

While remaining at ease, there's no clinging to experience.  
Vivid movements of mind are freed, ungraspable.  
Liberated in vivid clarity, there's no post-meditative state of mind.  
This is what we call the “spontaneously present three kāyas.”

Without any deliberate view, it is beyond dullness and agitation.  
Without deliberate meditation, it is entering the original 'womb'.  
Without deliberate conduct, it is free from rigid notions or ideas.  
One who has mastered this is a “lord among yogis.”

If you are aware of a thought as it suddenly appears,  
And can sustain the continuity of recognition,  
That is insight (*vipaśyanā*) gone astray in character.  
It can also be referred to as “post-meditation.”  
But it's not the freeing of thoughts as dharmakāya,  
And we must cut directly to the source.

Rigpa has always been free from conceptual elaboration.  
Conventions such as 'view', 'meditation' or 'conduct' and  
Any clinging to them is cleared, without basis or origin.  
Good thoughts, bad thoughts, and those in between,  
Without slipping into any such categorization,



Are freed upon arising, without any agent to make distinctions.  
As long as awareness does not lose its own ground,  
There is no need for anything more than this.

Even if you were to meet a hundred scholarly monks, a thousand siddhas,  
Ten thousand translators and pandits, a hundred thousand instructions,  
Or a billion treatises, still there'd be no call to clarify uncertainty or doubt.

*Samaya*. Signs are fading.

To my only son, Khyentse Özer, this was given by the Samantabhadra of awareness  
in the manner of a transmission of blessings and realization. Do not show it to  
anyone, but conceal it in your heart.

Thus, in the Akaniṣṭha cave on the twenty-sixth day of the Month of Miracles, at a  
time when the ḍākinīs gathered during my dark retreat, I set this down on a side of  
precious paper.

This profound aural transmission is sealed with *atham*.

Only this! Only this!

The contents are elaborated upon in *The Words of the Omniscient One*.

| Translated by Adam Pearcey, 2015, at the request of Dza Kilung Rinpoche. The translator is indebted  
to Sam van Schaik, whose excellent version of this text appears in *Approaching the Great Perfection*  
(Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004, pp. 170–171). Any significant differences in interpretation here are  
based on our reading of Yukhok Chatralwa Chöying Rangdrol's commentary.

# A Song to Introduce the Unmistaken View of the Great Perfection

by Khenpo Gangshar

Placing my head at the feet of the Dharma King, I offer homage: Bless me that I might see natural luminosity.

Hey, you of great fortune!

Sit without moving,  
like a tent peg driven into hard earth!

Gaze with your eyes neither open nor closed,  
like the eyes of a deity in a fresco!

And let your mind settle, loose and relaxed,  
like a woollen blanket spread out on the ground...

At times like these, while resting in the utter brilliance that is the space beyond thought, which may be likened to a cloudless sky, you will experience unimpeded translucence like a faultless crystal.

This is none other than the view of the ultimate, the luminous Great Perfection. Resting in equipoise within the pure luminosity, vividly clear like the sky, dullness and agitation are naturally voided and do not arise anew – a faultless, brilliantly clear non-conceptual meditation. When thought arises, be it good or bad, it is recognized for what it is and will not disturb. Focus upon this method and view your genuine nature; effortless, it arises by relaxing into the expanse, and thoughts are pacified on their own ground.

When you are able to practice for longer periods, it can be like, for example, when muddy water is stirred up and then allowed to settle – the innate lucidity of the water becomes clearer. Similarly, when myriad appearances arise and are realized to be like reflections, they cause the natural clarity of mind itself to become ever clearer. This in turn leads to the effortless arising of various qualities, such as the various types of clairvoyance and so on.

Should even the Great Master of Oḍḍiyāna appear before you, he'd have nothing greater than this to say on the view of the Great Perfection.

Should even Longchen Rabjam appear before you, he'd have nothing greater to teach you on the practice of taking thought as the path.

Should even the twenty-five exalted disciples appear before you, they'd have nothing greater to say concerning this practice.

As for myself, a yogin, this is my practice, and I have no greater meditation instruction to offer you.

You may analyze meticulously, but when a wind blows it naturally disperses the clouds and the sky can be seen. Endeavour to see empty clarity, mind itself, in the same way – there is nothing greater than this understanding. If you don't stir up the silt, the water will remain clear; as such, don't analyze. Simply rest without contrivance and you will come to see the emptiness of mind itself. There is nothing greater to see than this!

There are many views, but that of the emptiness of mind itself, devoid of all grasping, is the unmistakable view of the Great Perfection. When death comes to yogis of this method they are able to seize the clear light of death.

Hearing about it is beneficial, but I pray the actual experience of clear light will become evident.

*Written by the old ignoramus, Gangshar Wangpo. May it prove meaningful!*

Translated by Sean Price, 2015

# Vomiting Gold

## A pith instruction in the form of advice for the diligent practitioner, the excellent Atsang

by Khenpo Gangshar Wangpo

I bow before the glorious and sublime guru.

Child of a good father,

All worldly endeavors, focused, as they are, upon this life alone, have no essence whatsoever. It is beyond the slightest doubt that the guru – embodiment of the three rare and sublime ones – and especially the transcendent dharma are the absolute refuge and source of your well-being. Understand that this realization is the divide between continually transmigrating within saṃsāra and liberation.

Now let's see if you are up to much. A good child would give up distraction, disregard confusion, and extract the essence of leisure and fortune. To do this you must reflect upon impermanence....

Child of good lineage, some listen to this and some to that, what is spoken here and what is said there; some look at the ways of birth, illness, ageing and death; some act to accumulate wealth; others build homes; while some are given to study and contemplation, others train in the approaching and accomplishing practices of secret mantra in retreat. Nevertheless, of all of these, those who go on to achieve the ultimate are very few and far between.

Some ponder sickness, mortality, etc., and some do not, but all have to go through the pain such experiences bring – and that includes you! To fully realize that you could die at any moment is to have developed confidence in the contemplation upon impermanence.

Continually counsel yourself and in each and every moment to look at and cleanse your mind. Don't give in to distraction or fall under the influence of confusion, but rather, with the awakened ones and their offspring as your witnesses, practice with ardent endeavor.

Generally speaking there isn't a single teaching of the Buddha that is inadequate, woeful, or fruitless; and the main import of them all is to embrace each and every thought mindfully.

There is no need to alter your mind, simply sustain a mindfulness of your thoughts that looks directly into their very essence. Through this a powerful and clear awareness, unalterable by anything, will be revealed.

Essentially then, when distracted thoughts arise, they are called mind. When free of such distractions your innate awareness cannot be influenced by anything, be it positive and beneficial or negative and harmful.

When thought, confused or otherwise, arises, don't see it as a failure or fault; simply relax into its nature. With familiarity, awareness will come to be thoroughly distinguished from mind, with the former stabilized and latter liberated.

From time to time it is important to supplicate your guru, receive empowerment, and mix your mind with his or hers.

Similarly, should you practice deity yoga and mantra recitation, do so from within awareness. Awareness stripped bare will sever the head of self-grasping and selfish endeavor.

Shout "Phat", practice yogic exercises, dream, and, during the day, meditate upon your illusory body within the sustained continuity of awareness. For this practice your environment makes no difference.

Sure signs of genuine practice are an increase in renunciation and compassion. Please keep this in mind.

Without moving or being distracted from this natural state of awareness, and with the attitude of *bodhicitta*, be diligent in making vast prayers of dedication; practice the seven-branch offering to accumulate merit; and meditate upon Vajrasattva, reciting the hundred-syllable mantra. As we have been carried along by a subtle undercurrent of thoughts over successive lifetimes and have accumulated karma thereby, it is imperative to confess all faults and to pledge to refrain from them in the future. These and other such practices are essential.

*Requested by the ardent practitioner, Atsang, I, the confused old beggar Gangshar, gave rise to a cascade of concepts and wrote this, much like an old dog vomiting up golden instructions.*

Translated by Sean Price, 2015

# A Lamp to Dispel Darkness

An Instruction that Points Directly to the Very Essence of Mind  
In the Tradition of ‘the Old Realized Ones’

by Mipham Jampal Dorje

## The Homage

Homage to the Lama, inseparable from Mañjuśrī, the embodiment of wisdom!

*Without having to study, contemplate, or train to any great degree,  
Simply by maintaining recognition of the very nature of mind according to the approach  
of the pith instructions,  
Any ordinary village yogi can, without too much difficulty,  
Reach the level of a vidyādhara: such is the power of this profound path.*

## The Instruction that Cracks Open the Egg-shell of Ignorance

When you leave your mind in a state of natural rest, without thinking any particular thought, and at the same time maintain some kind of mindfulness, you can experience a state of vacant, neutral, apathetic indifference, called “*lungmaten*”, (a ‘no-man’s land’), where your consciousness is dull and blank.

In this, there is not any of the clear insight of *vipaśyanā*, which discerns things precisely, and so the masters call it **marigpa** (“non-recognition, ignorance, unknowing”). Since you cannot define it and say “This is what it’s like”, or “This is it!” such a state is called **lungmaten** (“undecided, indeterminate”). And since you cannot say what kind of state it is you are resting in, or what your mind is thinking, it is also called **tha mal tang nyom** (“an ordinary state of apathetic indifference”). In fact, you are stuck in an ordinary state within the *ālaya*.

You need to use such a means of resting the mind, as a stepping stone, so as to give rise to the non-conceptual state of primordial wisdom. However, if there is not the self-recognition of primordial wisdom which is our *rigpa*, then it cannot count as the main (meditation) practice of Dzogchen. As *The Aspiration Prayer of Samantabhadra* says:

A blank state, devoid of any thought whatsoever—  
*That is marigpa, the cause of delusion.*

Therefore, when mind experiences this kind of dull state that lacks any thought or mental activity, by allowing your attention to turn naturally and gently towards the one who is aware of this state—the one who is not thinking—you discover the pure awareness of *rigpa*, free of any movement of thought, beyond any notion of outside

or inside, unimpeded and open, like the clear sky.

Although there is no dualistic separation here between an experience and an experiencer, still the mind is certain about its own true nature, and there is a sense that, “There is nothing whatsoever beyond this.” When this occurs, because you can not conceptualize it or express it in words, it is acceptable to apply such terms as: “free from all extremes”, “beyond description”, “the fundamental state of clear light” and “the pure awareness of rigpa.”

As the wisdom of recognizing your own true nature dawns, it clears away the blinding darkness of confusion, and, just as you can see clearly the inside of your home once the sun has risen, you gain confident certainty in the true nature of your mind.

*This was ‘the instruction (mengak) for cracking open the egg-shell of ignorance (marigpa).’*

## The Instruction for Cutting through the Web of Saṃsāric Existence

When you gain this kind of realization, you understand that this nature of reality has always been this way, timelessly, that it is not created by any causes or conditions, and that it never undergoes any kind of transition or change in the past, present or future. At the same time, you can not find even the tiniest fraction of something called “mind” that is separate from this nature.

You could also say that the state of mental blankness we looked at earlier is indescribable, but it lacks decisiveness, since you are completely **unable** to describe it in any way. Rigpa, on the other hand, is in essence indescribable, but at the same time it has a decisive quality that cuts through any doubt about what is indescribable. So there is a huge difference between these two kinds of indescribability, like the difference between blindness and perfect vision.

This covers the crucial point of distinguishing between the ālaya and the dharmakāya.

Therefore, because terms like ‘ordinary mind’, ‘mental nondoing’, ‘inexpressible’ and so on are used in two different ways—only one of which is authentic—when you come to know the crucial point of how the same words can have a higher level of meaning, you can come to experience the true meaning of the profound Dharma.

When resting in the essence of mind, some feel that what is to be maintained is a simple clarity, a simple awareness, and so they settle in a state of ordinary mental consciousness, thinking, “This is clarity.” Some focus their attention on the awareness of an absorbing sense of emptiness, as though their minds had ‘become’

empty. But, in both cases, there is some clinging to the dualistic experience of an aspect of ordinary mental consciousness.

When you find yourself in either of these states, look into the innate nature (*bab*) of that subtly fixated attention—the clarity and the one perceiving the clarity, the emptiness and the one perceiving the emptiness—and, by doing so, you will take away the support for the ordinary consciousness that perceives things dualistically. Then, if you can decisively recognize the innate nature of your own mind in all its nakedness—clear and open, without any limit or centre—and a state of lucid clarity arises, **that** is what is called, ‘the very essence of rigpa.’ With this, as rigpa sheds the covering layer of experiences involving clinging, its pure and pristine wisdom is laid bare.

*This was ‘the instruction for cutting through the web of conditioned existence.’*

### The Instruction for Remaining in the Equalness which is like Space

This is how you should recognize the pure awareness of rigpa once it is freed from the various layers of ordinary thinking and experience, like a grain of rice freed from its husk—by settling naturally and making use of rigpa’s own self-knowing (or self-illuminating) quality.

It is not enough, however, simply to understand the nature of rigpa; you must be able to remain in that state with some stability through developing familiarity. And so it is very important that, without becoming distracted, you sustain constant mindfulness, so as to continue resting in an utterly natural state of awareness.

When you are maintaining that state, at times you might experience a vague and dull state with no thoughts, while at other times you might experience an unobstructed state (*zang thal*) with no thoughts that has the clarity of vipaśyanā. At times, you might experience states of bliss on which you fixate, while at other times you might experience states of bliss free of such fixation. At times, you might have various experiences of clarity with grasping, while at other times you might experience a vivid clarity that is unsullied and free of grasping. At times, you might have unpleasant and disturbing experiences, while at other times you might have pleasant and soothing experiences. And at times, you might experience an extreme turbulence of thoughts which carries your mind away, causing you to lose your meditation; while at other times, you might experience unclear states of mind because of a failure to distinguish between mental dullness and vivid clarity.

These and other experiences come about unpredictably and to an extent you can not measure, like various waves produced by the winds of karma and habitual thoughts, which you have cultivated throughout beginningless time. It is as though you are on a long journey, during which you visit all sorts of different places—some of them pleasant, some fraught with danger—but whatever happens, you do not allow it to



deter you, and continue on your own path.

In particular, when you are not yet familiar with this practice, and you have the experience of ‘movement,’ as all manner of thoughts stir in your mind, like a blazing fire, don’t become discouraged. Maintain the flow of your practice without letting it slip away, and find the right balance, so that you are neither too tense nor too relaxed. In this way, the more advanced meditative experiences, such as ‘attainment,’<sup>1</sup> will occur one after another.

At this point, investigate the distinction between the recognition and nonrecognition of rigpa, between ālaya and dharmakāya, and between ordinary awareness and wisdom. Through the master’s pith instructions, and on the basis of your own personal experience, have confidence in the direct introduction you receive. While you are maintaining this, just as water clears by itself if you do not stir it, your ordinary awareness will settle in its own nature. So you need to focus mainly on the instructions which clearly show how the true nature of this awareness is naturally arising wisdom. Don’t analyze with a view to adopting one state and abandoning another, thinking, “What is this that I am cultivating in meditation? Is it ordinary awareness or wisdom?” Nor should you entertain all kinds of speculations based on the understanding you have gained from books, because doing will only serve to obstruct both śamatha and vipaśyanā.

At some point, the aspect of familiarity or śamatha—which here means settling in an utterly natural way with stable and continuous mindfulness—and vipaśyanā—which here means the awareness that knows its own nature by itself—will merge together automatically. When this happens, and you gain some stable familiarity with it, you come to understand how the śamatha and vipaśyanā that are the primordial stillness of the natural state and the clear light of your own nature have always been inseparable, and the naturally arising wisdom that is the wisdom mind of Dzogpachenpo dawns.

*That was the instruction for remaining in the equalness which is like space.*

The glorious Saraha said:

Having gone beyond thinker and thinking,  
Remain like a young child, free of thoughts,

This is the way to be. He also said:

Focus on the master’s words and apply great effort—

Then, if you have received the master’s instructions introducing you to your rigpa:

There is no doubt that your inherent nature will arise.

As he says, the naturally arising wisdom that is mind's inherent nature, and which has always accompanied your ordinary mind from time immemorial, will dawn. This is no different from the inherent nature of everything, and so it is also called the 'genuine clear light of the fundamental nature (*nyukma dön gyi ösal*).'

Therefore, this approach of resting in a completely natural state and maintaining the recognition of your own nature, or rigpa, the very essence of mind, or the nature of phenomena, is 'the pith instruction that brings together a hundred crucial points in one.' This is also what you are to maintain continuously.

The true measure of your familiarity with this is the ability to maintain the state of clear light during sleep. The signs that you are on the right track can be known through your own experience: your faith, compassion and wisdom will increase automatically, so that realization will come easily, and you will experience few difficulties. You can be certain about how profound and swift this approach is if you compare the realization it brings with the realization gained only through great effort in other approaches.

As a result of cultivating your mind's own natural clear light, the obscurations of ordinary thinking and the habits it creates will be naturally cleared away (*sang*), and the two aspects of omniscient wisdom will effortlessly unfold (*gyé*). With this, as you seize the stronghold of your own primordial nature, the three *kāyas* will be spontaneously accomplished.

*Profound! Guhya! Samaya!*

*This profound instruction was written by Mipham Jampal Dorje on the twelfth day of the second month, in the Fire Horse year (1906), for the benefit of village yogis and others, who, while not able to exert themselves too much in study and contemplation, still wish to take the very essence of mind into experience through practice. It has been set out in language that is easy to understand, in accordance with the experiential guidance of a great many old realized masters. Virtue! Mangalam!*

| *Rigpa Translations, Adam Pearcey, 2005.*

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1. This is a reference to five successive experiences that occur during the development of meditation in general, and *śamatha* in particular. They are termed 'movement' (compared to a cascade of water down a rock face), 'attainment' (compared to a torrent in a deep ravine), 'familiarization' (compared to a meandering river), 'stability' (compared to an ocean free of waves), and 'consummation' (compared to a mountain). ↔

# The Essence of Mind

by Mipham Rinpoche

*Namo Guru Mañjuśrīye!*

The actual nature of things is inconceivable and inexpressible. Yet, for those fortunate individuals who seek to penetrate the profound meaning of *dharmatā*, I shall here offer a few words by way of illustration.

What we call “essence of mind” is the actual face of unconditioned pure awareness, which is recognized through receiving the guru's blessings and instructions. If you wonder what this is like, it is empty in essence, beyond conceptual reference; it is cognizant by nature, spontaneously present; and it is all-pervasive and unobstructed in its compassionate energy. This is the rigpa in which the three kāyas are inseparable.

It is therefore as the vidyādhara Garab Dorje said in his *Final Testament*:

This rigpa, which has no concrete existence as anything at all,  
Is completely unobstructed in the arising of its self-appearances.

To summarize: the actual nature of mind—the way it has always been, in and of itself—is this innate pure awareness that is unfabricated and unrestricted.

When this is explained in negative terms:

- It is not something to be apprehended;
- Nor is it a non-existent void;
- It is not some combination of these two,
- Nor is it a third option that is neither.

This is the view of the absence of any identifiable existence, the fact that it cannot be conceptualised in any way by thinking, “It is like this.”

When explained in more positive, experiential terms, it is said to be glaringly empty, lucidly clear, vividly pure, perfectly even, expansively open, and so on.

To illustrate this using examples: without limit or centre, it is like space; in its unlimited clarity, it is like sunlight flooding the sky; with out clear inside and outside, it is like a crystal ball; in its freedom from clinging and attachment, it is like the traces of a bird in flight; and neither arising nor ceasing, it is like the sky.

To dispel any doubts or misunderstandings that might arise from this instruction, it is described as the great clarity that is beyond partiality, the great emptiness of freedom from conceptual reference, the great union that cannot be separated, and so on.

In terms of its meaning, as it cannot be pointed out by words, it is *inexpressible*; as it cannot be known with ordinary modes of consciousness, it is *inconceivable*; and as it does not fall into any extreme, it is the great *freedom from elaboration*. In the end, it is beyond all expressions, such as: it is all and everything, it is not all, everything lies within it, or does not, and so on. It remains an individual experience of self-knowing awareness.

The names used to illustrate it are 'primordial purity' (*ka dag*) and 'spontaneous presence' (*lhun grub*), and, when summarizing: 'the single, all-encompassing sphere of naturally arising wisdom' (*rang byung ye shes thig le nyag gcig*).

As it is the pinnacle of all in terms of the qualities it possesses, it is also the transcendent perfection of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*) and so on.

Symbolically, it can be revealed by means of the sun, or a magnifying glass, a crystal ball, or a finger pointing into space, and so forth.

When you have a precious jewel in your own hand,  
Even if others should discard them, why be angry?  
Without losing your connection to these instructions,  
The pinnacle of Dharma, and your own good fortune,  
Even if others should criticize them, why be angry?

*By Mipham.*

Translated by Adam Pearcey, 2016, with the kind assistance of Alak Zenkar Rinpoche.

# The Essence of Wisdom: How to Sustain the Face of Rigpa

by Mipham Rinpoche

To the glorious Primordial Protector, I pay homage!

There are three stages to sustaining the essence of rigpa: recognition, perfecting the strength, and gaining stability.

At first, refine your understanding until, through the guru's instructions, you come to see the actual face of rigpa, nakedly and without intellectual speculation. Once you have arrived at certainty, it is crucially important that you sustain rigpa's essence by yourself. Mere recognition is insufficient; you must develop its strength. Moreover, although you might recognise rigpa in the beginning, unless you settle in that recognition, it will soon be interrupted by thoughts, making it difficult to experience the naked, unadulterated rigpa. So, at this stage it is crucial that you settle without blocking or indulging thoughts, and rest repeatedly, and for periods of increasing duration, in an experience of uncontrived, pure awareness. Once you have familiarised yourself with this again and again, the waves of thought will weaken and the face of rigpa that you are sustaining will grow clearer. During meditation remain in this experience for as long as you can, and in post-meditation maintain the mindfulness of recalling the face of rigpa. If you can familiarise with this the strength of rigpa will increase. Thoughts will continue to arise at first, but, without having to resort to any other remedy in order to stop them, they will be freed by themselves in an instant simply by leaving them as they are—like a snake uncoiling its own knots by itself. Then, with further familiarity, rising thoughts will continue to bring some slight disturbance but will dissolve immediately by themselves, like writing on water. As you become still more familiar with this state, you will reach a point at which rising thoughts no longer have any effect at all, and you have no hope or fear about their arising or non-arising. This experience beyond benefit and harm is likened to a thief entering an empty house. By continuing to familiarise yourself with this, you will reach the level of perfect strength, at which point thoughts and the ālaya, together with any tendency to produce movement in the mind, all dissolve into unaltered dharmakāya, and rigpa is secure in its own place. Just as you might search for ordinary earth and stones on an island of gold, without ever finding them, the whole of appearance and existence, without exception, arises as a dharmakāya realm, in which purity is all-encompassing. This is known as 'gaining stability', the point at which any hopes and anxieties about saṃsāra and nirvāṇa or birth and death are eradicated entirely.

Just as, in this way, daytime perceptions and thoughts are gradually brought into rigpa's domain, during the night-time too, there is no need to rely on any other

instruction, as this can be applied to dreams and the recognition of the clear light of light and heavy sleep. Having understood this, you must persist in the practice until you gain stability, with unflagging diligence like the continuous flow of a river.

*This instruction was given by Mipham. May virtue and goodness abound!*

Translated by Adam Pearcey, 2016, with the kind assistance of Alak Zenkar Rinpoche.

# The Nature of Mind

by Mipham Rinpoche

Mind's nature is indivisible emptiness and clarity,  
Inexpressible and indestructible, like space.  
In seeing it, there is no separate one who sees;  
There is but a single, all-encompassing sphere.  
Even looker and looking are one and the same.  
This view of seeing all at once is unsurpassed,  
A centreless, limitless, exceptional experience.  
In this fruition in which what has to be done has been done,  
There's no seeing at all, and any wish to see,  
Any deep longing to discover the view,  
Is naturally destroyed from its very depths.  
To arrive at such contentment and evenness<sup>1</sup>  
Is to be touched by brave Mañjuśrī's beneficent light.

*Mipham wrote this on the 12th day of the seventh month, in the year of the Fire Rat (1876). Maṅgalam.*

Translated by Adam Pearcey, 2016, with the kind assistance of Alak Zenkar Rinpoche.

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1. Some editions of the Tibetan have *khong snyom*, but according to Zenkar Rinpoche this is an error for *khod snyom*. ↩

# Advice on the View, Meditation, Action and Fruition

by Nyala Pema Düdul

*Namo mahāguru buddhāya!*

It is exceptional among all the tenets of the outer, inner and secret vehicles,  
It is the key to crossing the ocean of excellent teachings in all their many aspects,  
And it is the single point that's sufficient for understanding the buddhas' ultimate wisdom—

Grant your blessings, so that I may recognize my very own rigpa as the guru!

The *view* that is uncontrived, without basis or origin, the original condition:  
Let the view that is primordial wisdom, devoid of thought, manifest!

*Meditation* that is sustained awareness, referenceless and free from grasping:  
Without 'meditating', let the wisdom of clear light unfold in mind's expanse!

*Action* that is spontaneous, taking whatever occurs as the path of yogic conduct:  
Let perceptions and mind arise as the action of realizing 'one taste'!

Beyond the duality of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, and free from hope and fear:  
Let the ultimate *fruition* of reality-itself be actualized!

Now, for advice on the uncontrived, naturally arising view,  
Listen again, all you devoted disciples!

When you gain stability, abiding by the uncontrived natural state,  
There's no need to look any further: clear light dawns all by itself.  
There's no need to meditate: mind's nature is already there.  
Distraction is impossible: awareness is its very essence.  
Movement dissipates by itself: thoughts are purified like the sky.  
There's no need for adjustment: just abide by the empty-clarity.  
And no need for hope or fear: saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are equally free.

Listen again, all you disciples gathered here!

The mind that's always been free has no defining marks.  
Even when looking, nothing is seen—it is emptiness.  
But it is not an empty void—it's aware and clear.  
Awareness and emptiness are indivisible, pervasive like the sky,  
Without focus, all-penetrating, beyond coming and going.  
And yet all manner of thoughts and perceptions arise.  
It is not existent, because it is empty,  
It is not non-existent, because there's intrinsic awareness,



Appearance and emptiness are in union, realization's expressive power.  
Your own mind, undistracted, is the dharmakāya,  
And the wisdom mind of the buddhas is dharmakāya too.  
These two are indivisible, merged within clear light.  
When, out of this ground of emptiness-dharmakāya,  
Clear light dawns as its expression, spontaneously perfect,  
Wisdom, love and capacity for action blaze in strength;  
Primordial wisdom unfolds effortlessly and impartially;  
And buddha-forms and pure-lands arise in boundless measure.

Listen again, all you disciples gathered here!

As for this old beggar's practice,  
His view is Dzogchen, the Great Perfection;  
His meditation, Mahāmudrā, the Great Seal;  
And his conduct, the Vinaya, pure and simple.

*Translated by Adam Pearcey, 2015.*

# A Torch to Illuminate Crucial Points on the Path of Meditation

by Tsultrim Zangpo

Dharmakāya space, beyond arising and free from constructs,  
Its unobstructed radiance, the sambhogakāya clarity,  
And unbiased expressions, nirmāṇakāya manifestations—  
To the guru who personifies these three kāyas, I bow.

Seeing the wisdom of empty basic space as the guru,  
The nature of spontaneous presence as the *yidam* deity,  
And compassionate energy's radiant expression as ḍākinī—  
May the essence of these three roots, our own awareness, prevail!

The ultimate, natural state of phenomena is nothing other than the naturally arising wisdom of mind-as-such. When this is actualised the natural state of both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is also actualised, because [the nature of mind] is nothing other than the actual nature of things.

In character, this is the nature of the phenomena of the universal creator,<sup>1</sup> the emptiness that is freedom from limiting concepts. In its ultimate form, this emptiness is the empty quality, which, together with the essence of awareness, is the nature of mind. As long as you are cut off from this nature, there can be no realisation. Yet when the practitioner rests in meditation within mind-as-such, the phenomena of both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa arise as the display of this emptiness-wisdom.

If there were an additional dharmatā nature, somehow independent from the nature of mind, any phenomena which had that nature would also be independent and distinct from mind-as-such. And this, in turn, would mean that they were truly existent. As their nature would not therefore be empty of true reality, this would make true existence the nature of things.

Therefore, since all expressive appearances are nothing other than the manifestation of pure awareness, whatever objects appear 'out there' do so within the mirror of awareness. It is not that there is some independent basis underlying their appearance. Pure and impure phenomena, therefore, arise through the power and strength of awareness. This means that if you settle in meditation on the wisdom that is empty of mind and realise that, all phenomena will arise as empty forms—appearing while lacking true existence.

Well then, you might wonder, what about the method for settling in the nature of mind?

Even the very state of mind that you have right now—in which thoughts unfold with clinging and conceptual references—has awareness as its essence, free from the sullyng effects of grasping and never straying from a state that is all-penetrating. This is what you must actualize and settle in. Within the essence of this experience there is an empty quality, which is the absence of thoughts, and there is a stillness aspect, which is the absence of movement. There is also a quality of bliss to the experience, and an aspect of clarity, or discerning intelligence. These various qualities are present spontaneously, and have always been perfect, from the very beginning. And this means that when you actualize pure awareness it is *impossible* for these qualities not to manifest automatically at the same time. Whichever quality arises, therefore—whether bliss, clarity or whatever it might be—do not focus on it deliberately, and do not remain in the experience. Instead, settle naturally without contrivance, simply ensuring that you do not forget or lose the experience of the so-called “awareness quality”, the aspect of wisdom that is mere awareness, free from thoughts. To sustain the continuity of the experience in this way, by simply maintaining recognition, or not forgetting it, is the original, natural meditation that is unspoilt by any further, deliberate meditation. Continually abiding by this experience, without becoming distracted and without any deliberate focus, is “genuine, intrinsic mindfulness.” This is to be undistracted and not lose mere awareness (or mere ‘non-forgetfulness’), and, whenever you are distracted, to drop the distraction simply through recognising its essential nature.

These forms of mere awareness will converge inseparably and indivisibly—and this is said to mark the beginning of the dawning of thoughts and perceptions as wisdom. Do not make any separation, then, between the ‘looked at’ and the looker, the remaining and the remainder, the sustained and the sustainer. If you can maintain the continuity of the experience of settling, without deliberate effort, in the mere seeing of mind’s own essence, objects of distraction will fade away in the intrinsic nature itself, for they do not fall outside the nature of its all-encompassing space. Both within and between meditation sessions, allow all bonds of speculation and doubt—all thoughts of “Is it?” or “Isn’t it?”—to be released by themselves. This is what is known as “space-like yoga.”

You might wonder whether this quality of awareness transforms all that it knows into discerning wisdom (*prajñā*) and insight (*vipaśyanā*). All that it knows or is aware of is seen within the empty expanse of pure awareness itself, which has always been manifest from the very beginning. In fact, these objects of awareness have never actually gone beyond this expansive nature—not even for so much as a single instant. That is why, when we now settle in meditation, there is no need to apply the ‘patch’ of emptiness to pure awareness. Simply settling right into that pure awareness and leaving everything just as it is will swiftly bring about a realisation of emptiness.

The meditation in which you settle naturally in pure and vivid awareness is a means of sustaining ‘ordinary knowing’ (*tha mal ba’i shes pa*). It is crucial that you adopt a relaxed form of mindfulness, remaining in the experience of pure awareness while not chasing after objects.

Whether within or between meditation sessions,  
As long as you do not waver from a mindful state,  
That is the “great meditation of not meditating”.  
Never forget this, but try to apply it at all times.

Though the merit if this, may all beings, my dear old mothers,  
Swiftly attain the level of enlightenment, I pray.

*The one named Tsul spoke this in response to the requests of Dongna Gyenlo and Tsunpa Yilo. May virtue and goodness abound, and may the teachings of the Great Perfection spread far and wide!*

| Translated by Adam Pearcey, 2016.

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## Notes

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1. Similar to the *ālaya*. ([AZR](#)) ↔

# A Brief Presentation of View, Meditation and Action

*by Yangthang Rinpoche*

## **Homage**

Primordial protector, who remains forever within the single all-encompassing sphere of reality,  
Lord who pervades all buddha families, Lama Vajradhara,  
With complete reliance and fervent devotion, I pray to you one-pointedly:  
Grant your blessings so that the wisdom-mind transmission may enter my heart!

## **Preliminaries**

Now that you've gained the support of a human life, so hard to find,  
Aroused a mind of renunciation, so difficult to develop,  
Met an authentic master, so rarely encountered,  
And taken up the sacred Dharma, so scarcely discovered,  
Reflect, over and again, on the difficulty of finding  
Such a physical support providing all the right conditions for practice.  
If you fail to make use of the full human potential you now possess,  
Which is impermanent like a candle in the wind,  
Don't think that you can rely on it for a long time to come.  
At death and in the bardos, lacking the confidence of liberation,  
How frightening will be the next life's sufferings!  
When we must wander endlessly in saṃsāra,  
How distressing it is to contemplate its nature!  
Whatever you can do to gain real confidence in this life,  
I, for one, will be most grateful!  
This is what I hope for you.

## **View**

If you wish to look into the mirror of mind's nature,  
Don't look outwards, but turn within.  
Looking outwards brings perpetual delusion.  
But look within and you'll see your own mind.  
Don't follow past thoughts,  
Nor anticipate thoughts to come,  
And as for present thoughts and agitation,  
As soon as you turn your mind inwards,  
Don't try to adjust or modify it in the slightest,  
But leave it, just as it is, totally free, in its own natural resting place.  
Leaving thoughts in their natural place of rest like this  
Is not the actual main practice, but simply the way to leave the mind.  
Yet in that very experience of leaving the mind in this way

You're on the verge of meeting the rigpa of the main practice.  
 As soon as you leave the mind in its natural state,  
 Thoughts will naturally cease and be gone.  
 What is left when the natural radiance of thoughts has vanished,  
 Is the essence of mind, empty and vivid.  
 Free of fixation, dimension or limit,  
 There arises a space-like experience.  
 This is the empty essence, the dharmakāya.  
 In this empty state,  
 The nature of the mind is clear and lucid —  
 Free of any actual characteristic one could point to,  
 It is the natural clarity of the mind, unrestrained and unimpeded.  
 Innately cognizant, it's the saṃbhogakāya.  
 Besides this cognizant yet empty rigpa,  
 There is no other one that sees.  
 What is seen is the empty dharmakāya,  
 And the one that sees it is cognizant wisdom,  
 These two can be referred to as 'empty' and 'cognizant',  
 Or as 'all-pervading space' and 'wisdom.'  
 But they're not two different things:  
 The nature of that which is empty is clarity,  
 And the essence of that which is clear is empty.  
 Therefore, clarity and emptiness are an inseparable unity.  
 Since they're not different, but of a single taste,  
 There's no duality of something seen and one who sees it,  
 This is 'seeing' in a non-dual way.  
 Hence it is called 'self-knowing rigpa.'  
 The mind sees itself by itself.  
 In the experience of the single taste of clarity and emptiness,  
 Good and bad — saṃsāra and nirvāṇa — are of equal taste.  
 Thus, 'saṃsāra and nirvāṇa' are not different.  
 This is the Great Perfection, *Dzogpachenpo*.  
 This Great Perfection,  
 When it is realized by anyone at all,  
 Brings impartial compassion  
 And unlimited pure perception —  
 Arising effortlessly and naturally in the mind.  
 This is all-pervading compassion, the nirmāṇakāya.  
 This, therefore, is the three-kāya rigpa.  
 Decide that there is nothing else apart from this.  
 As long as you're undecided, you'll be scattered  
 And never realize the nature of mind.  
 Decision must be made in certainty.  
 This is the view of the Great Perfection.

## Meditation

Of the view, meditation and action, view is most important.  
It's crucial that you realize the view without error,  
For unless you realize the view, meditation will have no basis.  
So you must realize the view directly, with no confusion.  
And then, when taking this to heart through meditation,  
To abide in the experience of the view that you have recognized,  
For longer and longer periods, through perseverance, is meditation.  
Other than this, there's nothing else on which to meditate.  
Furthermore, until you perfect the view,  
Don't count your practice in years or months,  
But decide to dedicate the whole remainder of your life to Dharma practice.  
This is the approach of the very best practitioners.  
If from the start you talk about simplicity, equality and the like,  
But instead of practicing in sessions remain completely lax,  
Acting out whatever comes to mind, whether eating, sitting, indulging yourself or  
lying about,  
In the end, there's a great danger your simplicity will prove futile,  
And when death comes, all will have been in vain.  
Meaningless talk and boasting are useless,  
So you should follow in the footsteps of the great ones,  
And be humble, a genuine Dharma practitioner in word and deed.  
It would be best to go to deserted mountains,  
But, otherwise, stay away from busy places.  
Having divided your time into sessions and periods in-between.  
Practise meditation formally, and abandon the nine forms of activity.  
Without being outwardly distracted or inwardly grasping,  
Settle evenly into an experience of the natural resting place of mind.  
No matter what appears to the five senses,  
Let it be like stars or planets reflected in the surface of a lake,  
And rest evenly in the natural expanse, without grasping  
And without the slightest reference point — *this* is the supreme meditation.  
Although this may be difficult in the beginning,  
With gradual training, it will progressively unfold.  
In post-meditation, train in emptiness and compassion,  
Seeing things as magical illusions or dreamlike.  
Exert yourself as much as you can in the Dharma practices that purify obscurations.  
And, in particular, it's crucial to merge the view from the time of meditation  
With whatever thoughts arise, in order to unite meditation and post-meditation.  
Distinguish between the all-ground and dharmakāya, mind and rigpa.  
Recognize qualities and faults such as the three forms of erring, straying and being  
mistaken,  
And make adopting qualities and avoiding faults the very heart of your practice.

This is what to do during the post-meditation.  
When you strive in such practice for a long time,  
All the experiences of bliss, clarity and emptiness will occur.  
But no matter what arises, don't fixate on the constant flow of perceptions,  
But resolve them with the view, and maintain the flow of practice in the natural  
resting place of mind.  
Progressively, positive experiences will increase, and bad signs disappear.  
In each session, first arouse the mind of enlightenment,  
And receive the four empowerments of guru yoga.  
At the end, seal the session with dedication and aspiration prayers.  
Since these provide the structure of meditation practice, they're indispensable.  
In particular, the practice of Guru Yoga  
Is the ultimate means of arriving at the state of non-meditation.  
So, until your own rigpa dawns directly as the lama,  
Since this is the main form of meditation practice, cherish it as crucial!  
If you can practise like this in four sessions each and every day,  
Constantly and without wavering,  
You'll perfect the various stages, such as the five experiences Vimalamitra taught,<sup>1</sup>  
And in the original resting place,  
You'll seize the citadel — of this you must have no doubt!  
Even if you can't manage this, and you practise these instructions with only  
moderate effort,  
Listening to and reflecting upon the teachings to a certain extent,  
Attachment to the eight worldly concerns will weaken,  
And you'll spend your life carefree, contented and at ease.  
From your very first step on the path it won't take long  
Before you're liberated in primordial omniscience — this is certain!



## Action

Then, to touch briefly upon action:

When you're resting in meditation in this way

And a new thought arises all of a sudden

Or the undercurrent of thoughts churns away,

Rising thoughts are seen from the experience of your own rigpa.

Don't follow them, considering them good or bad, pleasant or suffering.

Don't do anything, in fact. But, as soon as you see the rising,

Within the rising itself, let mind find its own natural place of rest.

By leaving mind in its own place, thoughts will disappear there and then,

And you'll arrive directly at rigpa once again.

Then, as before, maintain the practice of mind's own place of rest.

In this way, whenever any good or bad thought should arise

Don't grasp onto it, but allow it to be freed as it arises.

There are three ways in which thoughts are liberated,

But there's really no difference between them — they're all 'self-arising, self-liberation'.

When a thought appears, it comes from the expanse of dharmakāya,

And when a thought goes, it ceases within rigpa's expanse.

Risings are harmless if you know how to let them liberate naturally.

This is the special instruction to enhance the view.

If you exert yourself in this, you'll have fewer thoughts,

And their arising will not harm the ground,

And the three ways of liberating — lesser, middling and greater — will unfold progressively.

But without these key points of liberation,

The final attainment of freedom will never come.

Knowing the way to liberate thoughts is the supreme form of action.

The fruition of such practice is that

Destructive emotions and thoughts will weaken,

Attachment to the eight worldly concerns will diminish,

Devotion and pure perception will steadily increase,

You'll recognize dreams, clear light will arise, and so on —

These are authentic fruits of the path.

Otherwise, to have visions of deities, receive prophecies,

Gain clairvoyance and the like may or may not be the fruit of the path,

Whether good or bad, we can't say, for it could all be the deception of Māra,

So don't wait, but immediately put them aside.

Finally, at death or in the bardo of dharmatā,

Recognize the ground appearances, and, in that very ground,

Having seized the citadel, you're certain to gain liberation!

I have written this brief presentation of View, Meditation and Action,

Merely as a response to a friend's request which I couldn't refuse —  
A rather hypocritical endeavor for one who knows nothing of what is here described,  
And one which will undoubtedly produce many errors.  
Be sure, therefore, to ask others to clarify your every doubt.  
In the unlikely event that this does contain one or two points of value,  
I dedicate the merit so they may be a cause for my friend's practice to grow in  
strength,  
And for it to be accomplished completely,  
So that he may be liberated in the expanse of the primordial ground.  
In short, I pray for the accomplishment of the twofold benefit.

*I, the one who bears the name of Yangthang Tulku, wrote this rather incoherent,  
disorganized text simply to avoid turning down the insistent request of Lama Tsewang,  
a Dharma friend from Riwoche in Kham. May it be a cause of benefitting a friend's  
practice!*

| Rigpa Translations, 2013. Edited for Lotsawa House, 2016

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1. The five stages are: 1) movement, 2) attainment, 3) familiarity, 4) stability and 5) consummation. ↔

# From the Oral Tradition of the Lama of Nyarong

*Homage to the lama!*

The Nyarong Tertön Rinpoche (i.e., Tertön Sogyal) said:

“At this, the time for discovering Buddha directly, you must remain alone, without companions, in an isolated mountain retreat—with a staff to the right, a container of grain to the left, a copper pot in front, and a cave behind. From now until the attainment of enlightenment, you must look upwards, entrusting ourselves to the teacher and Three Jewels, and downwards, into the naked unity of awareness and emptiness. At all times and in all situations, you must guard the fortress of the view, just as you would cherish a diamond. And you must continue meditating until, your eyes turned lifeless and blue, you breathe your very last breath.”

# On the Final Words of Orgyen Tendzin Norbu

*by Dodrupchen Jigme Tenpe Nyima*

*Homage to the guru!*

Our noble teacher, Orgyen Tendzin Norbu, trained in the five sciences and gained liberation through the path of the heart-essence of the Great Perfection. At the moment of his passing, he spoke the following verse as his final testament:

I am Guru Padmākara of Oḍḍiyāna,  
A buddha free from birth and death.  
Awakening mind is impartial and unbiased,  
Beyond labels of the eight stages, the four pairs.

If I were to elaborate a little on the meaning of this:

Generally, all the various turnings of the wheel of Dharma by the Lord Buddha were offered purely in order to protect disciples from the miserable routine of birth, death and the intermediate state. Among these teachings, for the ultimate tradition of the heart-essence, which is the vajra pinnacle, there is no delusion in the condition of great primordial purity, the original ground, and yet, not recognising this, the appearances of delusion, which are the creative energy of rigpa, arise. Through the three types of ignorance – single identity, co-emergent and imputational – thoughts involving dualistic grasping develop, one after another, in an endless chain. Then, through grasping, we are drawn into the endless cycle of suffering caused by karma and mental afflictions.

Through recognising and becoming familiar with the actual nature of the essence, which is untainted by confusion, the delusions of birth and death are naturally averted. Yet we can not see the nature of this essence through intellectual speculation (*rtog ge*) or through a mind that is contrived. Instead, we must receive the nectar of ripening empowerments and liberating instructions from an authentic guru who has inherited the actual transmission. Then, by cultivating the devotion of seeing the guru as inseparable from the vajradhara of Oḍḍiyāna, our mind will be inspired with blessings and the guru's wisdom mind will merge inseparably with our own mind. Though this, we will recognise the mind's natural condition, without contrivance or contamination, as the all-perfect, deathless Padmākara himself, then decide on that and gain stability. As this recognition is not generated through temporary causes and conditions, it is free from birth. And as it is not seen to increase or decrease or undergo transition or change, it is free from death. Thus, the attainment of birthlessness and deathlessness is bestowed naturally, in its own place, and when we gain the confidence of not seeking buddhahood elsewhere, there can be the lion's roar proclaiming:

I am Guru Padmākara of Oḍḍiyāna,  
A buddha free from birth and death.

When the nature of this awareness or awakening mind manifests, the appearances of birth and death are cast aside, the mind of fixated clinging is cut from within, and the cycle of conceptualisation is left behind.

Hopes and fears, or notions of adopting and avoiding, all focused on a nirvāṇa that is beyond conceptual elaboration, do not bring about any fragmentation of pure awareness, which is itself unsupported. Rather, whatever appears is its self-appearance, and whatever arises does so as its self-expression. All that might be labelled as subjective or objective throughout saṃsāra and nirvāṇa simply arises as the evolving manifestation of this pure awareness that is beyond partiality or bias. And these expressions dissolve within the ground. Once the stronghold of the ground is seized in its own place, this is superior to the original ground, as there is awakening within the sphere of the dharmakāya, the youthful vase body, clear light beyond confinement or restriction. Thus, the testament says:

Awakening mind is impartial and unbiased.

Therefore, in this vehicle there is no system of positing the fruition as something separate, as there is in the eight stages of the four pairs.<sup>1</sup> According to that approach, we regard delusory appearances as faults and train in a limited form of yoga, through which it is possible to overcome the ‘seeing discards’ of the three realms, but not the ‘meditation discards’ of the desire realm; or else, to enter that realm in order to discard them; or to discard most of the desire-realm afflictions; or to discard them all but not totally overcome the afflictions related to the two upper realms, with the result that the sufferings of birth and death are still not entirely overcome, and so on. Here, by contrast, out of the expanse of realisation of great, all-pervasive primordial purity, which is self-appearing and unbiased, all the grounds and paths are traversed at once. This point must be spelled out in detail, so the testament says:

Beyond labels of the eight stages, the four pairs.

This also shows how this is superior to the lower vehicles.

The meaning in a nutshell, then, is as follows:

Merging your own mind inseparably with the guru’s wisdom, settle evenly (without deliberately ‘settling’) in the genuine expanse of rigpa-emptiness. Then, at death, none of the terrifying delusory appearances of the intermediate state will cause awareness to stray from its own place. This ‘seizing of the stronghold’ is the essential message of the first three lines. It is the ultimate instruction for the moment of death within this tradition, and is also known as ‘the ultimate dharmakāya transference through sealing with the view’. For this, there is much to understand, such as the

way to sustain it right now, as well as the way to apply it at the time of death.

The final line shows how this path is superior to the other vehicles, all of which require effort; it means that certainty in one's own path must be stable.

To put it another way:

The first two lines show the means of achieving deathlessness through this path. Still, some might object that this alone would not make this the pinnacle of vehicles, because even the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas have a path that puts a stop to the sufferings of birth and death. In that case, it would suffice to offer the final line as a response and the third line as providing the reason.

In response to persistent requests from the faithful, diligent and intelligent Deshul Drakden, Tenpai Nyima quickly wrote down whatever came to mind on the third excellent day of the waning phase" (i.e., 27th) of the Phālguna month (*dbo zla*) in the wood-bird year (1909).

| Translated by Adam Pearcey, 2015.

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## Notes

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1. i.e., the four categories of stream-enterer (*rgyun du zhugs pa*), once-returner (*lan gcig phyir 'ong ba*), non-returner (*lan gcig phyir mi 'ong ba*) and arhat (*dgra bcom pa*), each of which can be further divided into the emerging (*zhugs pa*) and the established (*gnas pa*) to give eight categories in total. (See “skye bu zung bzhi'am gang zag ya brgyad” in Nor brang o rgyan, *Chos rnam kun btus*, vol.1, 493.) ←

# From the Heart Essence of the Vast Expanse

## The Prayer of the Ground, Path & Fruition

*Accompanied by the explanation of Yönten Gyatso*

### The Expression of Praise

Homage to glorious Samantabhadra!

To begin, **homage** is paid to **glorious** Samantabhadra. Samantabhadra is glorious in two ways: he is glorious in a personal sense through his realization of the dharmakāya, while through his compassion his glory extends to others. With this glory, all (**Samanta**) spheres of experience are sublime (**bhadra**), meaning that they are reflexive appearances that are pure within the mandala of wisdom. To this one pays homage, having met the suchness of reality itself face to face through the sign of the view of those with supreme faculties.

### The Main Body of the Prayer

The aspiration to realize that which is to be understood:

The three aspects of the fundamental wisdom mind

*The aspiration to realize the primordially pure wisdom mind, free of conceptual projections*

The true nature of things is naturally free of conceptual projections. It does not exist, since even the victorious ones do not see it. Yet neither is it non-existent, as it is the ground of all samsara and nirvana. There is no contradiction here, for it lies beyond the realm of expression. May all realize this Great Perfection, the true nature of the ground!

The original and **true nature of things** is the ground of all samsara and nirvana. This is the way things truly are. In other words, this ground does not depend on having to cut through all the concepts that are newly created by the path-oriented mind, for it is **naturally free of all conceptual projections**, such as existence, non-existence, and so forth. The reasoning here is as follows: All conceptual limitations pertain to either existence or non-existence. The positive affirmations of the victorious ones, whose boundless minds directly perceive all that can be known, are made merely to point something out by eliminating all forms of conceptual limitation. Hence, **it does not exist, since even the victorious ones do not see or show it. Yet neither is it utterly non-existent** like a flower in the sky, because the radiance of this primordially pure ground manifests unobstructedly.



Deluded experiences arise for sentient beings who do not recognize this, while for those who do, the experiences and realms of the buddhas manifest. Hence, it is **the ground of all samsara and nirvana**. If it were an object of the conceptual mind it would have to either exist or not exist. Yet since **it lies beyond the realm of thought and expression**, it is neither, and thus **there is no contradiction here**. **May all realize this Great Perfection** just as it is, **the true nature of the ground**; may all realize the wisdom of the dharmakāya, free of projections and primordially pure !

*The aspiration to realize the wisdom mind of the fruitional three kāyas*

In essence it is empty, hence free from the limitations of permanence.  
By nature it is clear and free from the limitations of nihilism.  
Its compassion unobstructed, it is the ground of manifold emanations.  
It is divided into three, yet in truth there are no such differentiations.  
May all realize this Great Perfection, the true nature of the ground!

**In essence, it**, meaning this fundamental awareness, **is empty** and completely unestablished. **Hence**, unlike the non-Buddhists who believe in a real and permanent consciousness and the nature of the Mind-Only school, which is held to be a permanent continuum, it is **free from the limitations of permanence**.

The undefiled dharmakaya, as the form of reality itself, is the ground of everything. **By its very own nature** this emptiness is **clear** and luminous, and thus the sambhogakāya is spontaneously present. In all circumstances, whether at the time of the ground, path, or fruition, it undergoes neither change nor fluctuation, and neither waxes nor wanes. It is, therefore, **free from the limitations of nihilism**.

As the radiance of this unified awareness-emptiness, **its capacity is unobstructed**. This is **the ground of manifold emanations**—the illusory empty forms that manifest, the pure as well as the impure.

**It is divided into three** distinct components, **yet in truth**, when it comes to the essence of this single awareness **there are no such differentiations**. **May all realize this natural Great Perfection, the true nature of the ground**, without losing sight of the wisdom of the sambhogakāya in which the three kayas are spontaneously present!

*The aspiration to realize the wisdom mind of the unity that defies the intellect*

Inconceivable and free of all superimposition, one-sided fixation  
On things being either existent or non-existent completely dissolves.  
The full import of this turns back even the tongue of the victors.  
Without beginning, middle, or end, it is a great expanse of deep clarity.  
May all realize this Great Perfection, the true nature of the ground!

To the conceptual mind, with its characteristic mind and mental states, the precise nature of this ground is **inconceivable**. The object, the sphere of reality, is **free of all** conceptual projections. Although the conventions "primordial purity" and "spontaneous presence" are used in order to communicate, if one latches onto the existence or non-existence of the sphere of reality, the mind will fall prey to **superimposition** and its basic nature will not be seen.

The same holds for the subject as well, meaning wisdom, since this causes **allone-sided fixation on things being either existent or non-existent to completely dissolve** into the expanse of reality. This realization, in which subject and object are of one taste, can be put into conventional terms, yet its **full import** defies such expressions; it **turns back even the tongue of the victors**, who reign supreme when it comes to using positive affirmations to describe the true nature of things.

This inherent pure awareness is **without birth in the beginning**, abiding in the **middle**, or cessation in the **end**; it is a **great** and spontaneously present **expanse of deep, radiant clarity**. **May all realize the unified Great Perfection, the true nature of the ground**—an inconceivable reality that defies the intellect!

The aspiration concerning that which enables one to come to this understanding:

**To be free from deviations and mistakes concerning the three key points of the path**

*[The aspiration to ]bring the wisdom mind to a point of culmination through the ground by being directly introduced to one's original state*

Its essence is pristine, unoriginated, and primordially pure.

Whatever manifests is the expression of this unconditioned spontaneous presence.

Without perceiving them as other, realizing the great unity of awareness-emptiness,

One's understanding of the ground will reach a point of culmination.

May there be no deviations and mistakes concerning this key point of the path!

Awareness defies the intellect. **Its essence** is untainted by superficial dualistic thought patterns and, hence, **pristine**. This inconceivable reality transcends conditioned characteristics; it is **unoriginated and primordially pure**. **Whatever manifests**, meaning the various positive and negative thoughts that occur, **is the natural expression of this unconditioned and spontaneously present awareness**. Hence, **without perceiving them as other**, such thoughts are liberated on their own. There is no need to accept and affirm some while rejecting and denying others. By being directly introduced to one's original state and **realizing the great unity of awareness and emptiness**, one's **understanding** will harmonize with the true nature

**of the ground and reach a point of culmination. May there be no deviations and mistakes concerning natural liberation, this key point of the natural path of the Great Perfection. May all realize the true nature as it is!**

*The aspiration to be freed from the restraints of the view, meditation, and conduct by directly realizing a single point*

Pure from the beginning, even the term “view” does not exist.  
Aware of the original state, the sheath of meditation falls away.  
There are no reference points, hence no need to restrain one’s conduct.  
In the spontaneously present nature, this state of naked simplicity,  
May there be no deviations and mistakes concerning this key point of the path!

The objective sphere of reality has been **pure from the beginning** and is devoid of all conceptual projections, such as existence, non-existence, and so on. This sphere is inextricably linked with its corresponding subject, wisdom-awareness. Hence, **even the term “view,”** which encompasses both observer and observed, **does not exist.** By simply remaining undistracted from this **awareness of the original state, the sheath of meditations** that involve a conceptual reference point will **fall away,** leaving a state of bare awareness.

**There are no reference points** at all here, meaning that the mind no longer judges appearances as being either good, bad, or neutral. **Hence, there is no need to restrain one’s conduct** by fixating on the idea that there are some things to accept and others to reject.

All the various appearances that are clung to and labeled by the conceptual mind, therefore, are **the spontaneously present<sup>1</sup> nature** of primordial purity, the sphere of the primordial ground. Said differently, they are encapsulated by the dharmakaya. Without losing the ability to maintain **this state of aware naked simplicity,** may all come to directly realize this single point! **May there be no deviations and mistakes concerning this key point of the path** and may all become completely absorbed in the primordial sphere!

*The aspiration to bring the realization of the inherent absence of needing accept and reject to a point of culmination by being confident in the face of liberation*

Not falling into partiality towards positive thoughts or negative ones,  
And without giving free rein to a state of indifferent neutrality,  
Manifestation and liberation—an expanse unrestricted, unbridled, and spontaneously free.  
Understanding that the nature is inherently devoid of needing to accept and reject,  
May there be no deviations and mistakes concerning this key point of the

path!

**Not falling into the partiality** of affirming some things and suspiciously denying others, as is the case when we fixate on what are perceived to be **positive thoughts**, such as faith and devotion, **or negative ones**, like attachment and aggression; **and without giving free rein to a state of indifferent neutrality** and the subtle undercurrent of thoughts, failing to embrace them with innate mindfulness; the **manifestation** of the entire range of thoughts—good, bad, and neutral—is pure, **and liberation** occurs on its own, like a drawing on water. Since manifestation and liberation are simultaneous, the **expanse** of the wisdom mind is **unrestricted, unbridled, and spontaneously free**. **Understanding that the nature** of primordially pure awareness **is inherently devoid of needing to accept and reject**, and without deliberately clinging or taking up some things and dismissing others, **may there be great confidence and no deviations and mistakes concerning natural liberation, this key point of the natural path** of Ati, the extraordinary Great Perfection!

**The aspiration to achieve the fruition of this understanding:**

**Seizing the throne of the threefold inner space**

*The aspiration to seize the throne of the dharmakaya, the inner space of primordially pure inner clarity*

Like space, awareness is the universal ground and starting point.  
Manifest ground spontaneously present, yet vanishing like clouds in the sky,  
The mind radiates out, projecting outwards and then returning within  
To the youthful vase body's inner space, possessing six unique  
characteristics—  
May all seize the throne of this majestic fruition!

Primordially pure **like space, awareness is the universal ground and starting point** of all samsara and nirvana. Within this state, **the manifest ground** is unobstructed and **spontaneously present**, yet its displays and manifestations **vanish like clouds in the sky**. Dualistic states of **mind radiate outwards**, and then the aspects of experience that were **projected outwards**, tainted as they are by the karmic energies, **return** to the clarity **within** along with their attendant habitual patterns, resolving back into a state of subtle wisdom. This subtle wisdom is present within **the inner space of the youthful vase body** and **possesses six unique characteristics**: 1) it appears to itself, 2) emerges from the ground, 3) individuates, 4) is liberated through individuation, 5) does not occur from something other, and 6) abides in and of itself. This is the perfect fruition of all the provisional vehicles and the essence of them all, above which there is nothing higher. **May all seize the throne of the perfect and primordially pure dharmakāya, remaining steadfast within this majestic fruition!**

*The aspiration to seize the throne of the nirmāṇakāya, the inner space in which awareness and the sphere of reality are indivisible*

From the very beginning, awareness itself is Samantabhadra.  
Within it, all hoping for attainments dissolves into the sphere of reality,  
The true character of the Great Perfection, beyond intentional effort;  
The sphere of reality and awareness, the inner space of Samantabhadri—  
May all seize the throne of this majestic fruition!

**From the very beginning**, this nature **itself** is undeluded and one need not rely upon the teachings of others. For this reason, **awareness is completely (Samanta)** transparent inside and out, and sublime (**bhadra**) in being utterly pure. By nature awareness is liberated from the start, so **within it, all hoping for attainments dissolves into the sphere of reality**. Such attainments are the results of abandonment and realization that the conceptual mind posits as needing to be attained anew in the lower vehicles. This is **the true character of the natural Great Perfection**, the true nature of things that lies **beyond** the conceptual mind's **intentional efforts** to engage some things and reject others. **The sphere of reality and awareness** are completely (**Samanta**) indivisible; they are the ground from which the pure play of appearances unfolds. Thus, from the inner space that completely pervades the sublime (**bhadri**) expanse of space, **may all seize the nirmāṇakāya throne of this majestic fruition**—the indivisibility of wisdom-awareness!

*The aspiration to seize the throne of the sambhogakaya, the inner space of the spontaneous presence of fundamental perfection*

Utterly non-abiding—the nature of the Great Middle Way;  
All-embracing and spontaneously vast—the state of Mahāmudrā;  
Freed from limitations and wide open—the key point of the Great Perfection.  
The virtues of the levels and paths fundamentally complete—spontaneously present inner space.  
May all seize the throne of this majestic fruition!

**Utterly non-abiding**, even the most subtle forms of conceptuality cannot grasp it as being limited in some imaginary way; it cannot even be called a “middle.” Through the true character of things, one arrives directly at **the nature of the Great Middle Way**. As the original mind, beyond being affirmed or denied, this wisdom mind is **all-embracing and spontaneously vast** in and of itself. By seizing **the stronghold** of this unbroken state of Mahāmudrā, one is **freed from the limitations** of the subtle habitual tendency to concentrate the mind. Samsara and nirvana are freed from the start, within the **wide open** expanse of this wisdom mind **the key point** of the path of **the Great Perfection's** pith instructions will reach a point of culmination. **All the virtues of the levels and paths** are **fundamentally complete** within this great, all-embracing Ati. This includes all the virtues of the nine vehicles: the progression of

the three common vehicles of the sutra path: the Listener Vehicle, Solitary Buddha Vehicle, and Bodhisattva Vehicle; the three classes of tantra of the unique mantra tradition: Kriya, Upa, and Yoga; and the three inner tantras in Anuttarayoga Tantra: the tantras of Mahāyoga, the transmissions of Anuyoga, and the pith instructions of Atiyoga. The fruition is present in this **spontaneously present inner space**, the state of the samboghakāya. **May all seize the throne of this majestic fruition**, wisdom-awareness, within the great expanse of the wisdom mind of the naturally-present dharmakaya!

### **The manner in which the prayer was spoken**

*The rationale for the profundity of its contents*

This profound prayer, a summation of the seal  
Of the quintessential vast expanse,

*The manner in which its profound meaning was requested by a protector*

Was set down at the behest of the protector of the teachings,  
The Rishi Rahula, who took the form of a monk.

*The purpose behind codifying the prayer as requested*

To make meaningful the spread of the profound reality  
And bring to perfection this prayer of interdependence,

*The entrustment to ensure the fulfillment of its intent*

I let loose this profound seal to the mad yogi of Kong.  
Entrusting it to this hidden master of awareness  
Who himself has been blessed by Akashagarbha.  
May its benefit for beings equal the reaches of space!

*As requested by Lushul Tulku, this was written by Yönten Gyatso. May it bring virtue!*

*| Translated by Cortland Dahl, 2006.*

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1. The term translated here as “spontaneously present” (*lhun grub*) is not found in the root verses of the Adzom or Khyentse versions of the prayer. In its place is the significantly different “having entered the womb” (*lhums zhugs*). I have gone with version found in Yönga’s explanation, however, since to replace it would render his commentary meaningless. ←

# Commentary on the Vajra Verses on the Natural State

by Yukhok Chatralwa Chöying Rangdrol

Here, in this explanation of the *Vajra Verses on the Natural State*, a mind treasure of the Omniscient Jigme Lingpa, there are three parts:

- I. The virtuous beginning: the meaning of the introduction
- II. The virtuous middle: the meaning of the main part
- III. The virtuous end: the meaning of the conclusion

## I. The Introduction

This has two parts: 1) the meaning of the title, and 2) the expression of homage.

### 1. The title

This refers to the line: “The Vajra Verses on the Natural State.” All phenomena are by nature emptiness, beyond arising, remaining and ceasing. In essence they are primordially pure, like space. Not produced by conditions, they are uncompounded. This has been elaborately explained as the so-called “element” or “buddha-nature” (*sugatagarbha*) in the profound secret teachings of the Bliss-gone Teacher, such as the sūtras revealing buddha-nature. *The King of Samādhi* says:

Pure, pristine, luminous,  
Unwavering, and unconditioned,  
This essence of the sugatas  
Is the nature as it has always been.

As this says, the essence of the buddha-nature has always been pure since the very beginning. Adventitious stains have never been part of its primordial condition, so it is by nature pristine and clear, without any impurity. It is not a nihilistic void, but is naturally luminous. As it does not fall into any ontological extreme, such as existing, not existing, and so on, and is beyond any conceptual limitation, it is unwavering. And as it is untainted by conditions, it is unconditioned. The sūtras of the middle turning reveal its nature as the 'three gateways of liberation.' As *The Sūtra Requested by Brahmā* says:

All phenomena have the nature of emptiness, beyond conceptual reference.  
All phenomena have the nature of characterlessness, beyond conceptual thought.  
All phenomena have the nature of wishlessness, beyond acceptance and rejection.

In the tantras of the uncommon Secret Mantra this is described as the original, primordial ground, or the dharmakāya rigpa which is present as the ground, and so on. *The Precious Treasury of Philosophy* says:

This original, primordial ground or naturally arising wisdom, which is expansive and beyond limitation or bias, is empty in essence, like the sky. It is clear by nature, like the sun or moon. And it is all-pervasive in its compassionate energy, like rays of light. These three qualities have always been essentially indivisible, as the nature of the three-kāya wisdom.

If we realize this naturally arising wisdom, which is referred to in various ways, then it becomes the basis for nirvāṇa. If we fail to realize it [i.e. naturally arising wisdom], then saṃsāra arises. Basic space has always been unconditioned; it is natural and spontaneously present buddhahood. As all the qualities of buddhahood are complete within it, it is the sugata-essence. It is obscured by stains, so it is the ultimate all-ground (*ālaya*). And in essence it is primordially pure, so it is the wisdom of clear light. As it is beyond any form of limiting projection, such as 'existing' or 'not existing', it is profound emptiness and the view of the Middle Way. As it is free from all conceptual elaboration, it is the transcendent perfection of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*). And as it has always been beyond transition or change, it is suchness.

This original natural state of primordial purity, unaltered and ordinary awareness, the open, unimpeded dharmakāya, or lucid quality of wisdom awareness, is taught to have the nature of the seven vajra qualities. The Omniscient Rangjung Dorje said:

It is *impenetrable* to the minds of intellectuals.

It is *impervious* to conventional reasoning.

It is *true*, as it accords with the natural state.

It is *incorruptible*, difficult for the unfortunate to fathom.

It is *stable*, its essence being beyond transition or change.

It is *unimpeded*, pervading throughout, and penetrating all, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

It is *invincible*, as nothing whatsoever can hinder it.

The instructions for pointing out directly the nature of this great and universal precursor to both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, the dharmakāya of the original dharmakāya buddha Samantabhadra are contained here, in these forty lines of infallible vajra speech.



## 2. Expression of Homage

At the beginning of this instruction of the Clear Light Great Perfection, there is an expression of homage to the extraordinary teacher, glorious Samantabhadra, the guide who has no origin or conclusion. He is the all-accomplishing king of wisdom, the Buddha who possesses the three qualities of self-origination: his buddhahood did not originate in the ordinary mind, his instructions did not derive from scriptures, and his fruition did not arise from a cause. To this glorious, original protector, the author offers homage beyond any involvement with the conceptual mind.

## II. The Main Part

This has seven sections: 1) identifying the ground, path and fruition, 2) describing calm abiding and insight, 3) showing rigpa to be the three kāyas, 4) pointing out how this is spontaneously present, 5) showing how view, meditation and action are purified within basic space, 6) the pitfalls to be avoided, and 7) decisive resolution.

### 1. Identifying the Ground, Path & Fruition

*The natural state of the ground is free from complexity,*

*And ground-appearances are rigpa-dharmakāya.*

*The path has always been clear of effort, from the very beginning.*

*When this nature itself is made manifest, it is the great source of freedom.*

*The fruition is not something separate and set apart.*

The natural state of the primordial ground is free from the four or eight conceptual limitations. Anything can arise within the basic space of that intrinsic nature, or 'as-it-isness', just as anything can appear in the immaculate surface of a mirror. How is this? In the expanse of clear light, free from centre or circumference, whatever arises dawns as the display of primordial wisdom, without falling into the limited dimensions of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. The natural state of the primordial ground is thus beyond all conceptual limitation.

“Ground-appearances” here refers to the time at which the yogi directly perceives the ground that is superior in its essence to the indeterminate all-ground of impure saṃsāric experience. At that time, all clinging and fixation connected with delusory thought is naturally freed, without being rejected, and this is what we call “primordially pure rigpa.” Then, when the vajra chains of awareness, which appear as the unceasing radiance of spontaneous presence, are seen directly as objects of sensory perception, that is “seeing the dharmakāya”. As it says in the Dzogchen tantras, “Child of noble family, if you wish to look into the face of dharmakāya, become familiar with the vajra chains that are rigpa's radiance.”

The line “The path has always...etc.” refers to the fact that this ground and its ground-appearances are unconditioned. They are not dependent on other

conditioned factors. The line shows that on the path, within the basic space that is free from effort and striving, the very consciousness that would eliminate or cultivate temporary risings has always been pure, from the very beginning.

When the primordially pure rigpa of the path stage is realized directly and freedom becomes extensive, there is awakening within the expanse of great primordial purity, the basic space that is the ultimate source of freedom.

These qualities of ground, path and fruition are not isolated from one another like separate tent dwellings. As the *Uttaratantra* puts it:

As it was before, so it is thereafter,  
For it is, by its very nature, changeless.

## 2. Calm Abiding & Insight

*When the fruition itself is present as cause,  
Settling completely is calm abiding (śamatha).  
Any sudden rising is rigpa's own radiance,  
And vivid awareness is insight (vipaśyanā).  
Directly, upon fading, there's primordial experience.*

When the ultimate fruition is not yet manifest, but is present as a cause, the stillness that comes from allowing any rising thoughts to settle completely is calm abiding (*śamatha*). This is likened to an ocean free from waves. Any thought which arises all of a sudden through the radiance or expressive power of the real nature is the radiance of rigpa. When we are vividly aware of this, that is what we call “naturally arising wisdom”, or the “wisdom of clear insight” (*vipaśyanā*). As all thoughts are nakedly freed, and fade into the basic space of the dharmadhātu, this brings about primordial experience, in which we remain.

## 3. How Rigpa is the Three Kāyas

*Remaining genuinely is the dharmakāya,  
Accompanying awareness is the sambhogakāya,  
Stillness and movement, non-dual, is the nirmāṇakāya.  
This is what we call the “three-kāya rigpa.”*

The first line refers to remaining genuinely in the uncontrived wisdom mind of primordial purity, in which phenomena dissolve, the natural state of the ground, beyond confinement and liberation. When this 'ordinary' state of awareness is recognized just as it is, without 'changing its fur' or 'altering its colour', then, as it is untainted by apparent objects externally and unspoilt by the clinging mind within, that is direct realization of the wisdom of dharmakāya, rigpa-emptiness. The fact that the spontaneous radiance, which is unceasing and the ground out of which saṃsāra

and nirvāṇa unfold, is not blocked, but arises, while we are aware of it, is what we call the sambhogakāya. Even though the expressive power (*rtsal*) of compassionate energy arises as objects, if thoughts vanish without trace, so that there is no opportunity for habitual tendencies to form, and arising and liberation occur simultaneously, then we come to master the great wisdom in which there is no division between stillness and movement. The ceaseless arising of the display from the king-like dharmakāya beyond transference is said to be the nirmāṇakāya. The “three-kāya rigpa” is what we call the inseparability of these qualities.

#### 4. How this is spontaneously present

*While remaining at ease, there's no clinging to experience.  
Vivid movements of mind are freed, ungraspable.  
Liberated in vivid clarity, there's no post-meditative state of mind.  
This is what we call the “spontaneously present three kāyas.”*

When the mind's 'knot' of dualistic grasping is released and undone the essence of the primordially pure ground is beyond labelling or identification. It is unfathomable by the conceptual mind and inexpressible by words. It is beyond any objective reference that could be described, and the one who might describe it is no longer present. Even if one were to remain in this experience of all-penetrating, unimpeded dharmakāya, the wisdom that is beyond the limiting confines of hope and fear, uninterruptedly day and night, still it would not feature the slightest thought of attachment to itself. The Omniscient Longchenpa put it like this:

When perfecting realization of genuine primordial purity,  
There is no one who wishes for such realization,  
And in the realization itself, there is no conceit.  
The yogi of illusion is thus beyond compare.

When movement of mind, which arises vividly through the expressive power of spontaneous presence, is freed by itself, it is beyond identification. As the *Thalgyur* says:

Free from the beginning, there is no basis for repetition.  
Freed by itself, there is no antidote.  
Nakedly free, it vanishes as it is seen.

As this says, in 'naked freedom' whatever thoughts arise, whether subtle or more apparent, are liberated with mere recognition, through the crucial point of their absence of any real essence. This is compared to meeting an old acquaintance. 'Self-freedom' means that, based on the crucial point of the absence of any antidote, whatever thoughts arise come into being automatically and are freed automatically, like a snake unwinding its own knots. 'Primordial freedom' means remaining in the primordial nature. Based on the crucial point of the absence of any basis for

repetition, the naturally abiding ground has nothing to lose and nothing to gain. This freedom which is beyond benefit and harm is illustrated by a thief entering an empty house. Furthermore, it is also said, “Freed upon arising, there is no before and no after.” As this indicates, when whatever arises in the mind is clearly freed within the space of the *dharmadhātu*, it is like the example of writing on water. Just as writing and its disappearance occur at the same time, arising and liberation occur simultaneously for whatever thoughts appear. And, according to the Omniscient King of Dharma, this uninterrupted process of spontaneous arising and spontaneous liberation is a special feature of the Natural Great Perfection.

From the perspective of meditative equipoise, in which one does not waver from this natural essence of primordial purity, one is freed from the five aggregates, and even in the post-meditation of the unceasing radiance of spontaneous presence one is untainted by the eight ordinary modes of consciousness. With no distinction between meditation and post-meditation, the name 'post-meditative state' does not apply. Like a traveller arriving at the fabled island of jewels who might search for ordinary earth and stones but will never find them, once we reach a point at which all that rises in the mind becomes the display of primordial wisdom, even though we might search for instances of ordinary delusion we will not find them. At this stage, all phenomena based upon dualistic perception are freed by themselves, even without being rejected. Like last night's darkness, which vanishes spontaneously and without trace in the light of the rising sun, dualistic perception disappears, even if we can not say where it is that it goes. As the vajra *ḍākinī* said, “For the yogi free from limitation, like the dawning of the sun, this is the experience of dharmakāya. Emaho!” Indeed, if you realize this, it is what we call “the spontaneously present, unaltered yoga in which the three kāyas are experienced on the path.”

## 5. How view, meditation and conduct are purified within basic space

*Without any deliberate view, it is beyond dullness and agitation.*

*Without deliberate meditation, it is entering the original 'womb'.*

*Without deliberate conduct, it is free from rigid notions or ideas.*

*One who has mastered this is a “lord among yogis.”*

When gaining this kind of realization, there is no dualistic division into an object to be viewed and the mindfulness that is the viewer. Moreover, it is free from dullness caused by the diminishing of awareness's clarity and the agitation of thoughts directed towards objects. The fact that meditative concentration with a particular focus does not lead to enlightenment is explained in *The Lion's Perfect Power*:

Practising meditative concentration you will not see the meaning of *dharmatā*.

Naturally present absorption (*samādhi*) is free from any deliberative position.

Free from conceptual mind, the natural state is equal to the limits of space.

There is no thought through which objects of reference might be perceived.

As this indicates, there is not the tiniest speck of meditation to be cultivated, and this is known as “entering the original womb.”

When this kind of realization unfolds, it is free of something to meditate on and one who settles in meditation. It is also beyond any particular form of conduct related to post-meditation, as one is beyond all fixed notions or ideas about rejecting or cultivating the phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

Anyone who masters the wisdom of rigpa in the genuine state<sup>1</sup> of the ultimate nature and who consequently gains power over all the phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa in their equalness, is what we would call a great lord among siddhas.

## 6. Pitfalls to be Avoided

*If you are aware of a thought as it suddenly appears,  
And can sustain the continuity of recognition,  
That is insight (vipaśyanā) gone astray in character.  
It can also be referred to as “post-meditation.”  
But it's not the freeing of thoughts as dharmakāya,  
And we must cut directly to the source.*

While the mind remains in empty clarity, if you are aware of a thought suddenly appearing and you sustain that continuity, this is the insight that errs in terms of character. It is not genuine insight. It would be fine to label it with the term 'post-meditation'. It is not a state in which whatever thoughts arise are freed as dharmakāya. Rather, whatever mental afflictions occur first arise as an object, are then noticed with pure awareness or mindfulness, and are finally left to settle in their own place. But this is merely the approach of purifying movement so that thoughts become objectless and without root. What is needed is to cut directly to the source, so that, through the crucial point of freedom in the *dharmatā* nature itself, whatever afflictions and thoughts arise do not hold firm, but disintegrate, freed by their very nature in simultaneous arising and liberation.

## 7. Decisive Resolution

*Rigpa has always been free from conceptual elaboration.  
Conventions such as 'view', 'meditation' or 'conduct' and  
Any clinging to them is cleared, without basis or origin.  
Good thoughts, bad thoughts, and those in between,  
Without slipping into any such categorization,  
Are freed upon arising, without any agent to make distinctions.  
As long as awareness does not lose its own ground,  
There is no need for anything more than this.*

In order to show how this 'ordinary' rigpa has always been free from conceptual

elaboration from the very beginning, the text points out how the conventions of 'view', 'meditation' and 'conduct' are like mere impressions. No matter how the unobstructed radiance of rigpa arises, delusory perception is cleared by itself, without any basis or foundation for clinging to it. When it arises as positive thoughts they arise spontaneously and are freed spontaneously. And when it arises as negative thoughts they become the vast expanse free from all limitations. When remaining in the same state, even neutral thoughts vanish by themselves. Not falling into any position related to existence or non-existence, and without considering there to be an agent separate from freedom upon arising, maintain unaltered 'ordinary' consciousness, the inexpressible state of awareness and emptiness. If this does not lose its own ground, there is no need for any further, supposedly greater form of view or meditation.

### III. Conclusion

#### 1. How it is Unnecessary to Clarify Doubts by Consulting Others

*Even if you were to meet a hundred scholarly monks, a thousand siddhas,  
Ten thousand translators and pandits, a hundred thousand instructions,  
Or a billion treatises, still there'd be no call to clarify uncertainty or doubt.*

This pith instruction is the concentrated essence of many hundreds of thousands of canonical sources, treatises, tantras, commentaries and pith instructions, from hundreds of scholars, who are skilled in explanation, debate and composition, and monks, who are supreme among all those maintaining the *vinaya*; as well as thousands of *siddhas* with knowledge, love and power; tens of thousands of *lotsāwas*, who translated the teachings from Indian languages into Tibetan; and *paṇḍitas*, learned in the five sciences. Even if you were to encounter many millions or even billions of other treatises, still there would be no need to clarify uncertainty or doubt, as this is the final, definitive statement.

#### 2. Colophon

*Samaya. Signs are fading.*

*To my only son, Khyentse Özer, this was given by the Samantabhadra of awareness in the manner of a transmission of blessings and realization. Do not show it to anyone, but conceal it in your heart.*

*Thus, in the Akaniṣṭha cave on the twenty-sixth day of the Month of Miracles, at a time when the dākinīs gathered during my dark retreat, I set this down on a side of precious paper.*

*This profound aural transmission is sealed with 'atham'.*

*Only this! Only this!*

*The contents are elaborated upon in The Words of the Omniscient One.*

| Translated by Adam Pearcey, 2015, at the request of Dza Kilung Rinpoche.

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1. Here Yukhok Chatralwa makes reference to the literal meaning of the term for “yoga” in Tibetan, *naljor* (*rnal 'byor*), and its individual syllables “nal” (*rnal*), meaning “genuine state”, and “jor” (*'byor*) meaning “to unite with”. ↩

# Hitting the Essence in Three Words

“The Special Teaching of the Wise and Glorious King”

The Root Text

Herein is contained *The Special Teaching of the Wise and Glorious King*, together with its commentary.

Homage to the master!

The view is Longchen Rabjam: infinite, vast expanse.  
Meditation is Khyentse Özer: rays of wisdom and love.  
Action is Gyalwé Nyugu, that of the bodhisattvas.  
One who practises in such a way,  
May well attain enlightenment in this very life.  
And even if not, what happiness! What joy! A la la!

## 1. Introducing directly the face of rigpa in itself

As for the view, Longchen Rabjam,  
Three statements strike the vital point.  
First, relax and release your mind,  
Neither scattered, nor concentrated, without thoughts.  
While resting in this even state, at ease,  
Suddenly let out a mind-shattering ‘phaṭ!’,  
Fierce, forceful and abrupt. Amazing!  
There is nothing there: transfixed in wonder,  
Struck by wonder, and yet all is transparent and clear.  
Fresh, pure and sudden, so beyond description:  
Recognize this as the pure awareness of dharmakāya.  
The first vital point is: introducing directly the face of rigpa in itself.



## 2. Decide upon one thing, and one thing only

Then, whether in a state of movement or stillness,  
Of anger or attachment, happiness or sorrow,  
All the time, in any situation,  
Recognize that dharmakāya you recognized before,  
And mother and child clear light, already acquainted, will reunite.  
Rest in the aspect of awareness, beyond all description.  
Stillness, bliss and clarity: disrupt them, again and again,  
Suddenly striking with the syllable of skilful means and wisdom.  
With no difference between meditation and post-meditation,  
No division between sessions and breaks,  
Always remain in this indivisible state.  
But, until stability is attained,  
It is vital to meditate, away from all distractions and busyness,  
Practising in proper meditation sessions.  
All the time, in any situation,  
Abide by the flow of what is only dharmakāya.  
Decide with absolute conviction that there is nothing other than this—  
The second vital point is: decide upon one thing, and one thing only.

## 3. Confidence directly in the liberation of rising thoughts

At that point, whether attachment or aversion, happiness or sorrow—  
All momentary thoughts, each and every one,  
Upon recognition, leave not a trace behind.  
For recognize the dharmakāya in which they are freed,  
And just as writing vanishes on water,  
Arising and liberation become natural and continuous.  
And whatever arises is food for the bare rigpa emptiness,  
Whatever stirs in the mind is the inner power of the dharmakāya king,  
Leaving no trace, and innately pure. What joy!  
The way things arise may be the same as before,  
But the difference lies in the way they are liberated: that's the key.  
Without this, meditation is but the path of delusion,  
When you have it, there's non-meditation, the state of dharmakāya—  
The third vital point is: confidence directly in the liberation of rising thoughts.

#### 4. Colophon

For the View which has the three vital points,  
Meditation, the union of wisdom and love,  
Is accompanied by the Action common to all the bodhisattvas.  
Were all the buddhas of past, present and future to confer,  
No instruction would they find greater than this,  
Brought out as a treasure from the depth of transcendental insight,  
By the tertön of dharmakāya, the inner power of rigpa,  
Nothing like ordinary treasures of earth and stone,  
For it is the final testament of Garab Dorje,  
The essence of the wisdom mind of the three transmissions.  
It is entrusted to my heart disciples, sealed to be secret.  
It is profound in meaning, my heart's words.  
It is the words of my heart, the crucial key point.  
This crucial point: never hold it cheap.  
Never let this instruction slip away from you.

This is the special teaching of the wise and glorious king.

| *Rigpa Translations, 2008.*

༄། །མཁམ་པ་གླི་རྒྱལ་པོའི་བྱད་ཆེས་བཞུགས་སོ། །

Hitting the Essence in Three Words

“The Special Teaching of the Wise and Glorious King”

སྤྲུལ་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ། །

Homage to the master!

ལྷ་བ་གློང་ཆེན་རབ་འབྱམས་ཡིན། །

The view is Longchen Rabjam: infinite, vast expanse.

སྒོམ་པ་མཁུན་བཟེའི་འོད་ཟེར་ཡིན། །

Meditation is Khyentse Özer: rays of wisdom and love.

སྤྱོད་པ་རྒྱལ་བའི་ལྷ་གུ་ཡིན། །

Action is Gyalwé Nyugu, that of the bodhisattvas.

དེ་ལྟར་ཉམས་སུ་ལེན་པ་ལ། །

One who practises in such a way,

ཚོ་གཅིག་སངས་རྒྱས་ལ་ཐང་མེད། །

May well attain enlightenment in this very life.

མིན་ཀྱང་སྒོ་བདེ་ཨ་ལ་ལ། །

And even if not, what happiness! What joy! A la la!

**1. Introducing directly the face of rigpa in itself**

ལྷ་བ་གློང་ཆེན་རབ་འབྱམས་ནི། །

As for the view, Longchen Rabjam,

ཚོག་གསུམ་དོན་གྱི་གནད་དུ་བརྟེན། །

Three words hit the vital point.

དང་པོ་རང་སེམས་སྤོད་དེ་བཞག། །

First, relax and release your mind,

མི་སྐྱོ་མི་བསྐྱ་རྣམ་ཉོག་མེད། །

Neither scattered, nor concentrated, without thoughts.

ངང་ལ་ཕྱུམ་གནས་སྟོད་དེའི་ངང་། །

While resting in this even state, at ease,

ཐོལ་བྱང་སྟོ་རྟེག་ཡེ་ཅིག་རྒྱབ། །

Suddenly let out a mind-shattering 'phat!'

བྲག་ལ་ངར་བྱང་ཨེ་མ་རྟོ། །

Fierce, forceful and abrupt. Amazing!

ཅི་ཡང་མ་ཡིན་ཉད་དེ་བ། །

There is nothing there: transfixed in wonder,

ཉད་དེ་བ་ལ་བྱང་ཐལ་ལེ། །

Struck by wonder, and yet all is transparent and clear.

བྱང་མ་ཐལ་བྱང་བཟོན་དུ་མེད། །

Fresh, pure and sudden, so beyond description:

ཚོས་སྐྱའི་རིག་པ་ངོས་བྱངས་ཤིག །

Recognize this as the pure awareness of dharmakāya.

ངོ་རལ་ཐོག་ཏུ་སྤྲད་པ་སྟེ་གནད་དང་པོ། །

The first vital point is: introducing directly the face of rigpa in itself.

**2. The second vital point is: decide upon one thing, and one thing only**

དེ་ནས་འཕྲོའམ་གནས་ཀྱང་རུང་། །

Then, whether in a state of movement or stillness,

ལྷོའམ་ཆགས་སམ་སྐྱིད་དམ་སྐྱུག །

Of anger or attachment, happiness or sorrow,

དུས་དང་གནས་སྐབས་ཐམས་ཅད་དུ། །

All the time, in any situation,

ངོ་ཤེས་ཚོས་སྐྱོ་ངོས་བབྱུང་ལ། །

Recognize that dharmakāya you recognized before,

སྲུང་འབྲིས་འོད་གསལ་མ་བྱ་སྤྲད། །

And mother and child clear light, already acquainted, will reunite.

བརྗོད་མེད་རིག་ཆའི་ངང་ལ་བཞག། །

Rest in the aspect of awareness, beyond all description.

གནས་བདེ་གསལ་འཕྲོ་ཡང་ཡང་བཞིག། །

Stillness and bliss, clarity and thinking: disrupt them, again and again,

ཐབས་ཤེས་ཡི་གོ་སློ་བྱུང་འབེབས། །

Suddenly striking with the syllable of skilful means and wisdom.

མཉམ་གཞག་རྗེས་ཐོབ་ཐ་དད་མེད། །

With no difference between meditation and post-meditation,

སྤྱོད་དང་སྤྱོད་མཚམས་དབྱེ་བ་མེད། །

No division between sessions and breaks,

དབྱེར་མེད་ངང་ཏུ་རྒྱུན་ཏུ་གནས། །

Always remain in this indivisible state.

འོན་ཀྱང་བརྟན་པ་མ་ཐོབ་པར། །

But, until stability is attained,

འདྲ་འཛི་སྤངས་ནས་སློམ་པ་གཅེས། །

It is vital to meditate, away from all distractions and busyness,

མཉམ་གཞག་སྤྱོད་ཏུ་བཅད་ལ་བྱ། །

Dividing the practice into proper meditation sessions.

ཏུས་དང་གནས་སྐབས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཏུ། །

All the time, in any situation,

ཚོས་སྐྱོ་གཅིག་པོའི་ཡོ་ལངས་བསྐྱུང། །

Abide by the flow of what is just dharmakāya.

དེ་ལས་གཞན་མེད་ཁོ་ཐག་བཅད། །

Decide with absolute conviction that there is nothing other than this—

ཐག་གཅིག་ཐོག་ཏུ་བཅད་པ་སྟེ་གཞན་པ་གཉིས་པའོ། །

The second vital point is: decide upon one thing, and one thing only.

### 3. The third vital point is: confidence directly in the liberation of rising thoughts

དེ་ཚེ་ཆགས་སྣང་དགའ་སྡུག་དང་

At that point, whether attachment or aversion, happiness or sorrow—

གྲོ་བུར་ནམ་རྟོག་མ་ལུས་པ། །

All momentary thoughts, each and every one,

ངོ་ཤེས་ངང་ལ་རྗེས་མ་བྱུང་མེད། །

Upon recognition, leave not a trace behind.

གྲོལ་ཆའི་ཚས་སྐྱེ་ངོས་བཟུང་བས། །

For recognize the dharmakāya in which they are freed,

དཔེར་ན་རྩ་ཡི་རི་མོ་བཞིན། །

And just as writing vanishes on water,

རང་ཤར་རང་གྲོལ་རྒྱན་ཆད་མེད། །

Arising and liberation become natural and continuous.

ཅི་ཤར་རིག་སྟོང་རྗེན་པའི་བཟས། །

And whatever arises is food for the bare rigpa emptiness,

ཇི་འགྲུ་ཚོས་སྐྱེ་རྒྱལ་པོའི་ཅུལ། །

Whatever stirs in the mind is the inner power of the dharmakāya king,

རྗེས་མེད་རང་དག་ཨ་ལ་ལ། །

Leaving no trace, and innately pure. What joy!

འཆར་ལུགས་སྣར་དང་འདྲ་བ་ལ། །

The way things arise may be the same as before,

གྲོལ་ལུགས་ལྟད་པར་གནད་དུ་ཆེ། །

But the difference lies in the way they are liberated: that's the key.

འདི་མེད་སྒོམ་པ་འཁྲུལ་པའི་ལམ། །

Without this, meditation is but the path of delusion,

འདི་ལྡན་མ་བསྒོམས་ཚོས་སྐྱའི་ངང་། །

With it, even without meditating, there's the state of dharmakāya—

གདེང་གྲོལ་ཐོག་ཏུ་བཅའ་བ་སྟེ་གནད་གསུམ་པའོ། །

The third vital point is: confidence directly in the liberation of rising thoughts.

#### 4. Colophon

གནད་གསུམ་ལྡན་པའི་ལྟ་བ་ལ། །

For the View which has the three vital points,

མཁྱེན་བརྗེ་འབྲེལ་བའི་སྒོམ་པ་དང་། །

Meditation, the union of wisdom and love,

རྒྱལ་སྐུ་སྤྱི་ཡི་སྤྱོད་པ་གོགས། །

Is accompanied by the Action common to all the bodhisattvas.

དུས་གསུམ་རྒྱལ་བའི་ཞལ་བསྐྱར་ཀྱང་། །

Were all the buddhas to confer,

འདི་ལས་ལྷག་པའི་གདམས་ངག་མེད། །

No instruction would they find greater than this,

དིག་རྩལ་ཚོས་སྐྱའི་གཏེར་སྟོན་གྱིས། །

Brought out as a treasure from the depth of transcendental insight,

ཞེས་རབ་གྲོང་ནས་གཏེར་དུ་བྲངས། །

By the tertön of dharmakāya, the inner power of rigpa,

ས་རྗོང་བརྒྱན་དང་འདི་མི་འབྲ། །

Nothing like ordinary treasures of earth and stone,

དགའ་རབ་དོ་རྗེའི་ཞལ་ཆེས་ཡིན། །

For it is the final testament of Garab Dorje,

བརྒྱད་པ་གསུམ་གྱི་སྤྲུགས་བརྒྱད་ཡིན། །

The essence of the wisdom mind of the three transmissions.

སྤྱིང་གི་བྱ་ལ་གཏད་དོ་རྒྱ། །

It is entrusted to my heart disciples, sealed to be secret.

ཟབ་དོན་ཡིན་ལོ་སྤྱིང་གི་གཏམ། །

It is profound in meaning, my heart's words.

སྤྱིང་གཏམ་ཡིན་ལོ་དོན་གྱི་གནད། །

It is the words of my heart, the crucial key point.

དོན་གནད་ཡལ་བར་མ་དོར་ཅིག །

This crucial point: never hold it cheap.

གདམས་ངག་ཟགས་སུ་མ་འཇུག་ཅིག །

Never let this instruction slip away from you.

མཁས་པ་གྲོ་རྒྱལ་པོའི་བྱད་ཚོས་སོ། །

This is the special teaching of the wise and glorious king.

*/ Rigpa Translations, 2008.*



# Hitting the Essence in Three Words

“The Special Teaching of the Wise and Glorious King”

The Commentary

Homage to the incomparable lord of compassion, my root master, in all his kindness!

In order to explain, in a few crucial points, how to take to heart the practice of view, meditation and action, first of all, as the lama embodies completely the Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha simply to pay homage to him alone is to pay homage to all sources of refuge everywhere. And so: **“Homage to the master!”**

Now for the main subject: If you take the practice to heart, while recognizing that the root and lineage masters are all inseparable from the true nature of your mind, this embodies the actual practice of view, meditation and action. So view, meditation and action are explained here by relating them to the meaning of the root and lineage masters’ names.

First, the View is the realization that all the infinite appearances (*rabjam*) of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, in their entirety, are perfectly contained and by nature equal within the all-encompassing space of the vast expanse (*longchen*) of buddha nature, which is the true nature of reality, free from any elaboration or complexity. And so: **“The view is Longchen Rabjam: infinite, vast expanse”**.

This view of the freedom from all elaboration is realized conclusively with the wisdom (*khyen*) that is the insight of vipaśyanā; and to rest evenly and one-pointedly in that state of śūnyatā, without ever separating from the skilful means of the śamatha of loving compassion (*tsé*), is the meditation that unites emptiness and compassion. So, **“Meditation is Khyentse Özer: rays of wisdom and love”**.

Action is to be imbued with such a view and meditation and then to practise the six perfections so as to benefit others, in keeping with the ways of the bodhisattvas, “the new shoots of the buddhas”. So, **“Action is Gyalwé Nyugu, that of the bodhisattvas”**.

To show how fortunate is the person who practises such view, meditation and action, **“One who practises in such a way,”**

Those who are able to seclude themselves in an isolated retreat, put aside the worldly cares and activities of this life and practise single-mindedly, will gain liberation—in their very lifetime—in the ground of primordial purity. So, **“May well attain enlightenment in this very life”**.

And in the next life you will go from happiness to happiness. So, **“And even if not, what happiness! What joy! A la la!”**

In order to explain, step by step, such a beneficial view, meditation and action, first I wish to set out at greater length how to take to heart and practise the view. And **“As for the view, Longchen Rabjam,”**

The entire meaning of this is imparted in this advice on the three words, for when they hit the essence of the practice, delusion is put to death. So: **“Three statements strike the vital point”**.

## I. Introducing Directly the Face of Rigpa Itself

First is the method of introducing the view that has not yet been revealed. Generally speaking, there are many ways of bringing the view to realization. In the sūtrayāna path of dialectics the method of lung rig is employed; that is, using the scriptural authority of the teaching of Buddha and the great masters, and through logic and reasoning, arriving at the realization of the view.

According to the common approach of Secret Mantrayāna, by means of the wisdom of example in the third empowerment, one is introduced to the real, ultimate wisdom in the fourth empowerment. Here, according to the special approach of the great masters of the practice lineage, the nature of mind, the face of rigpa, is introduced in and upon the very dissolution of conceptual mind.

Amidst the churning waves of delusory thinking, the gross arising thoughts which run after the objects of perception obscure the actual face of mind's true nature. So even if it were introduced, you would not recognize it. Therefore, in order to allow these gross discursive thoughts to settle and clear, **“First, relax and release your mind”**,

However, leaving your own mind relaxed and uncontrived is itself the wisdom of clear light. So paths that are contrived can never bring you to the realization of your true nature, and to signify that this uncontrived co-emergent wisdom is there, present within you: **“Neither scattered, nor concentrated, without thoughts”**.

When you are a beginner, even if you maintain mind's fundamental state, resting naturally, it will not be possible for you to avoid fixation on the many experiences such as 'bliss', 'clarity' and 'non-conceptuality' that come in the state of calm and stillness: **“While resting in this even state, at ease”**.

To free yourself from the 'cocoon' of attachment-to-experience, lay bare the all-penetrating rigpa and reveal explicitly its true state, **“Suddenly let out a mind-shattering *pha!*”**,

Since it is vital to cut through the flow of arising thoughts, and destroy meditation made by the mind, the sound '*pha!*' should be fierce, forceful and abrupt: **“Fierce, forceful, and abrupt. How amazing (emaho)!”**

At this moment, you are free from all fixed notions of what mind might be, and liberation itself is actualized: **“There is nothing there: transfixed in wonder,”**

In that state of dharmakāya, devoid of any reference or reliance whatsoever, all-penetrating, naked awareness dwells, just as it is, as the wisdom that transcends the mind, and so: **“Struck by wonder (*hedawa*), and yet all is transparently clear (*zang tal lé*)”**.

This all-penetrating, unimpeded awareness is the key point of inexpressible and naturally inherent wisdom, beyond all extremes such as rising and ceasing, existing and non-existing, and so beyond words and out of reach of mental enquiry. **“Fresh, pure and sudden, so beyond description:”**

The crucial point here is that rigpa, which abides as the ground of dharmakāya, is the primordial purity of the path of the yogins, the absolute view of freedom from all elaboration. Until you recognize this one point, then whatever meditation or practice you do, you can never get beyond a fabricated mind-made view and meditation. The difference between this and the approach of the natural Dzogpachenpo is greater than that between earth and sky, as it does not possess the essential point—the unceasing flow of clear light, which is non-meditation. So it is most important, first of all, to recognize this and this alone, and: **“Recognize this as the pure awareness of dharmakāya”**.

This, then, is the first of the three words which hit the essence. If the view has not been introduced and recognized, there is nothing to maintain in meditation. This is why it is so important, first and foremost, to be introduced to the view.

And since the natural, inherent wisdom is introduced as something natural and inherent in you, it is neither to be sought elsewhere, nor is it something that you did not have before, and that now arises newly in your mind. So: **“The first vital point is: introducing directly the face of rigpa in itself”**.

## II. Decide upon One Thing, and One Thing Only

Now to give a more detailed explanation of how to take the practice of meditation to heart:

In a natural state of rest, all the time and in any situation, let your meditation be like the continuous flow of a river.

Without cultivating stillness or suppressing the movement of thought, simply maintain the recognition that when stillness occurs, it is the dharmakāya’s own face, and when movement arises, it is the inherent power of wisdom. And: **“Then, whether in a state of movement or stillness,”**

From the energy of mind's thinking come negative emotions like anger and attachment that constitute the truth of the origin of suffering, as well as feelings like happiness and sorrow, which constitute the truth of suffering itself. Yet whatever experiences arise, if you can realize that the true nature of these thoughts and emotions is the very nature of reality, they will be just the flow of dharmakāya. And so: **"Of anger or attachment, happiness or sorrow,"**

Furthermore, generally speaking, even though you may have recognized the view, if you do not sustain it in meditation, and you slip into the ordinary proliferation of delusion, the same old patterns of thought will bind you to saṃsāra. As a result, the Dharma and you become divorced, and you end up no different from an ordinary person. That is why you must never be apart from this supreme state of resting naturally in non-meditation, and why: **"All the time, in any situation,"**

Therefore, whether the mind is still, active or whatever, it is not a question of overcoming each individual negative emotion and thought with its own separate remedy. Instead, the sole remedy for whatever thought or emotion may occur, the one remedy for all, is the recognition of that view which was introduced before, and that alone: **"Recognize that dharmakāya you recognized before,"**

So, whatever thought or emotion arises, in itself it is no other than the wisdom of dharmakāya, and the true nature of these thoughts and emotions is the actual clear light of the ground of dharmakāya. When you recognize this, that is what is known as 'the mother clear light present as the ground'.

To recognize your own nature in that view of the clear light of self-knowing rigpa introduced earlier by the master is what is known as 'the path clear light of practice.' To remain in the state where these two, the clear light of ground and path, are inseparable is known as 'the meeting of mother and child clear light'. **"And mother and child clear light, already acquainted, will reunite".**

In this way, always remind yourself of the view, which is the clear light recognized in you as your true nature. And as you are resting in that state, you should neither suppress nor indulge, neither accept nor reject, in any way, the thoughts and emotions that are its dynamic energy (*tsal*). This is a crucial point: **"Rest in the aspect of awareness, beyond all description".**

When you maintain that state for a long time, as a beginner you will have experiences of bliss, clarity or non-conceptuality, which will mask the face of your true nature. So if you free it from this shell of attachment-to-experience, and lay bare the actual face of rigpa, then wisdom will shine out from within.

There is a saying:

The more its flow is interrupted,  
The better the water in the mountain stream.  
The more it is disrupted,  
The better the meditation of the yogin.

So: **“Stillness, bliss and clarity: disrupt them, again and again,”**

“How to disrupt them?” you might ask. Whenever experiences of stillness, bliss or clarity arise, or feelings of joy, glee or delight, you must pulverize the shell of your attachment-to-experience, shattering it as if by a bolt of lightning, with the forceful sound of *‘phaṭ!’* which is the combination of *‘pha’*, the syllable of skilful means that concentrates and gathers and *‘ṭa’*, the syllable of prajna which cuts through.

**“Suddenly striking with the syllable of skilful means and wisdom”.**

When you do not lose this vital point of personal experience, and you maintain that indescribable, all-penetrating rigpa, all the time and in every situation, formal meditation and post-meditation will no longer be distinct: **“With no difference between meditation and post-meditation,”**

That is why the meditation in sessions and the meditation when you are active during breaks are not separate: **“No division between sessions and breaks,”**

In this ‘great meditation with nothing to meditate on’, the continuous river-like yoga of inherent, even and all-pervasive wisdom, there is not even a hair’s breadth of anything to meditate on, nor an instant of distraction.

This is what is meant by the saying:

Neither do I ever meditate, nor am I ever separate from it;

So I have never been separate from the true meaning of ‘non-meditation’.

And that is why: **“Always remain in this indivisible state”.**

If someone is a suitable and receptive vessel for the unique path of Dzogpachenpo, just as the teachings themselves intend, and he or she belongs to the ‘instantaneous’ type of person who is liberated upon hearing the teaching, then, for such a person, perception and thoughts are the supreme ground for liberation, and anything that happens becomes the flow of dharmakāya.

There is nothing to meditate on, and no one to meditate. Others, however, who are less fortunate and who still fall prey to delusory thinking must find stability in ‘gradual stages’. Until they do so, they must engage in the practice of meditation. Therefore: **“But until stability is attained,”**

That meditation must be practised when all the conditions favourable for meditative stability are complete; only then will real experience occur. No matter how long you

spend meditating in the midst of busyness and distraction, true meditation experience will not arise, and so: **“It is vital to meditate, away from all distractions and busyness”**.

While meditating too, though there is no difference between practice in formal sessions and post-meditation, if you are not truly grounded in your meditation first, you will be unable to blend the wisdom you experience with your post-meditation. However hard you try to turn your daily life into the path, your vague and generalized understanding makes you prone to slip back into your old negative patterns and habits. Therefore: **“Practising in proper meditation sessions”**.

You might have the sort of practice which makes you confident that you can keep up this state of meditation in proper sessions. Even so, if you do not understand how to integrate that practice with the activities of post-meditation and how to maintain it continuously, then this practice will not serve as a remedy when difficulties arise. When some discursive thought leads you off, you will sink back into very ordinary things. This is why it is so crucially important to abide in that all-penetrating state of awareness after meditation: **“All the time, in any situation,”**

At that point, there is no need to seek for anything else on which to meditate. Instead, in a state of meditative equipoise that never parts from this very view of dharmakāya, maintain a carefree nonchalance towards all actions and all thoughts, without suppressing or indulging them, but letting things come and go, one after another, and leaving them be: **“Abide by the flow of what is only dharmakāya”**.

A practice such as this, which is the indivisible union of śamatha and vipāśyanā, the yoga of the natural state free from elaboration, the uncontrived and innate, the abiding by the face of the intrinsic nature of reality, is the heart of the practice of all the tantras of the Secret Mantra Vajrayāna. It is the ultimate wisdom of the fourth empowerment. It is the speciality, the wish-fulfilling gem, of the practice lineage. It is the flawless wisdom mind of all the accomplished masters and their lineages, of India and Tibet, of both old (*nyingma*) and new (*sarma*) traditions.

So decide on this, with absolute conviction, and do not hanker after other pith instructions, your mouth watering with an insatiable appetite and greed. Otherwise it is like keeping your elephant at home and looking for its footprints in the forest.

You walk into the trap of unending mental research, and then liberation will never have a chance. Therefore you must decide on your practice, and: **“Decide with absolute conviction that there is nothing other than this—”**

Make a decision then that this naked wisdom of dharmakāya, naturally present, is the awakened state, which has never known delusion, and abide by its flow: this is the second secret and vital word. Since it is so crucially important: **“The second vital point is: decide upon one thing, and one thing only”**.

### III. Confidence Directly in the Liberation of Rising Thoughts

Now, at such times as these, if there is not the confidence of the method of liberation, and your meditation is merely relaxing in the stillness of mind, you will only get side-tracked into the samadhi of the gods. Such a meditation will not be able to overcome your attachment or anger. It will not be able to put a stop to the flow of karmic formations. Nor will it be able to bring you the deep confidence of direct certainty. Therefore, this method of liberation is of vital importance.

What is more, when a burning attachment is aroused towards some object of desire, or violent anger towards an object of aversion, when you feel joy about favourable circumstances, material possessions and the like, or you are afflicted by sorrow on account of unfavourable circumstances and things like illness—no matter what happens—at that moment the power of your rigpa is aroused, and so it is vital to recognize the wisdom that is the ground for liberation. **“At that point, whether attachment or aversion, happiness or sorrow—”**

Besides, if your practice lacks the key point of “liberation upon arising”, whatever subtle thoughts creep unnoticed into your mind will all accumulate more saṃsāric karma.

So, the crucial point is to maintain this simultaneous arising and liberation with every thought that rises, whether gross or subtle, so that they leave no trace behind them. **“All momentary thoughts, each and every one,”**

Therefore, whatever thoughts arise, you do not allow them to proliferate into a welter of subtle delusion, while at the same time you do not apply some narrow mind-made mindfulness. Instead:

Without ever separating from a natural genuine mindfulness, recognize the true nature of whatever thoughts arise, and sustain this “liberation upon arising” that leaves no trace, like writing on the surface of water. So: **“Upon recognition, leave not a trace behind”**.

If, at this point, the arising thoughts are not purified, dissolving as they liberate themselves, the mere recognition of thoughts on its own will not be able to cut the chain of the karma that perpetuates delusion. So at the very same instant as you recognize, by seeing the true nature of the thought nakedly, you will simultaneously identify the wisdom with which you are familiar from before. By resting in that state, thoughts are purified, dissolving so that they leave no trace, and that dissolution is a crucial point. **“For recognize the dharmakāya in which they are freed,”**

To take an example: writing or drawing on water. The very instant it is written, it dissolves—the writing and its disappearance are simultaneous. Likewise, as soon as thoughts arise, liberation is simultaneous, and so it becomes an unbroken flow of

“self-arising and self-liberating”: **“And just as writing vanishes on water,”**

And so, by not suppressing the risings, but allowing whatever arises to arise, any thoughts that do arise are actually purified into their own fundamental nature. You must hold to this method of integrating everything into the path as the essence of the practice: **“Arising and liberation become natural and continuous”**.

By applying the ‘exercise of dharmakāya’ to your thoughts in this way, whatever thoughts occur only serve to strengthen the rigpa. And however gross the thoughts of the five poisons are, that much more vivid and sharp is the rigpa in which they are liberated. **“And whatever arises is food for the bare rigpa emptiness,”**

Whatever thoughts may stir, they all arise from the all-penetrating true face of rigpa itself as its own inner power. Whenever they occur, if you simply abide in this, without accepting or rejecting, then they are liberated at the very instant they arise, and they are never outside the flow of the dharmakāya: **“Whatever stirs in the mind is the inner power of the dharmakāya king”**.

Thoughts in the mind, the delusory perceptions of ignorance, are pure within the expanse of dharmakāya that is the wisdom of rigpa, and so within that expanse of uninterrupted clear light whatever thoughts stir and arise are by their very nature empty. So: **“Leaving no trace, and innately pure. What joy!”**

When you have become used to integrating thoughts into your path like this over a long period of time, thoughts arise as meditation, the boundary between stillness and movement falls away, and as a result, nothing that arises ever harms or disturbs your dwelling in awareness: **“The way things arise may be the same as before,”**

At that juncture, the way that thoughts, the energy [of rigpa], arise as joy and sorrow, hope and fear, may be similar to the way they arise in an ordinary person. Yet with ordinary people, their experience is a very solid one of suppressing or indulging, with the result that they accumulate karmic formations and fall prey to attachment and aggression.

On the other hand, for a Dzogchen yogin, thoughts are liberated the moment they arise:

- at the beginning, arising thoughts are liberated upon being recognized, like meeting an old friend;
- in the middle, thoughts are liberated by themselves, like a snake uncoiling its own knots;
- at the end, arising thoughts are liberated without causing either benefit or harm, like a thief breaking into an empty house.



So, the Dzogchen yogin possesses the vital point of the methods of liberation such as these. Therefore, **“But the difference lies in the way they are liberated: that’s the key.”**

That is why it is said:

To know how to meditate,  
But not how to liberate—  
How does that differ from the meditation of the gods?

What this means is that those who put their trust in a meditation which lacks this vital point of the method of liberation, and is merely some state of mental quiescence, will only stray into the meditation states of the higher realms. People who claim that it is sufficient simply to recognize stillness and movement are no different from ordinary people with their deluded thinking.

And as for those who give it all kinds of labels like ‘emptiness’ and ‘dharmakāya’, the basic flaw in their remedy is exposed when it fails to hold up under the first misfortune or difficulty they meet. So: **“Without this, meditation is but the path of delusion”**.

‘Liberation on arising’, ‘self-liberation’, ‘naked liberation’, whatever name you give it this manner of liberation where thoughts liberate themselves and are purified without a trace is the same crucial point: explicitly to show this self-liberation. It is the extraordinary speciality of the natural Dzogpachenpo,

And so if you possess this key point, then whatever negative emotions or thoughts arise simply turn into dharmakāya. All delusory thoughts are purified as wisdom. All harmful circumstances arise as friends. All negative emotions become the path. saṃsāra is purified in its own natural state, without your having to renounce it, and you are freed from the chains of both conditioned existence, and the state of peace. You have arrived at such a complete and final state, there is no effort, nothing to achieve, and nothing left to do. And: **“When you have it, there’s non-meditation, the state of dharmakāya”**.

If you do not have the confidence of such a way of liberation, you can claim your view is high and your meditation is deep, but it will not really help your mind and nor will it prove a remedy for your negative emotions. Therefore, this is not the true path.

On the other hand, if you do have the key point of ‘self-arising and self-liberating’, then without even the minutest attitude of a ‘high view’ or notion of a ‘deep meditation’, it is quite impossible for your mind not to be liberated from the bonds of dualistic grasping.

When you go to the fabled Island of Gold, you can never find ordinary earth or stones, however hard you look. In just the same way, stillness, movement and thoughts, all arise now as meditation, and even if you search for real, solid delusions, you will not find any. And this alone is the measure to determine whether your practice has hit the mark or not, so: **“The third vital point is: confidence directly in the liberation of rising thoughts”**.

#### IV. The Colophon

These three key points are the unerring essence which brings the view, meditation, action and fruition, of natural Dzogpachenpo all together within the state of the all-penetrating awareness of rigpa. So in fact this constitutes the pith instructions for meditation and action, as well as for the view.

However this is not some abstract concept about which, to use the Dharma terminology of the mainstream textual tradition, a definitive conclusion is reached after evaluating it with scripture, logic and reasoning.

Rather, once you actually realize wisdom itself directly and in all its nakedness, that is the view of the wisdom of rigpa. Since all the many views and meditations have but ‘a single taste’, there is no contradiction in explaining the three vital points as the practice of the view. So: **“For the View which has the three vital points,”**

A practice such as this is the infallible key point of the path of primordial purity in the natural Dzogpachenpo, the very pinnacle of the nine graduated vehicles. Just as it is impossible for a king to travel without his courtiers, in the same way the key points of all yantras serve as steps and supports for the Dzogchen path. Not only this, but when you see the face of the lamp of naturally arising wisdom—the primordial purity of rigpa—its power will blaze up as the insight that comes from meditation. Then the expanse of your wisdom swells like a rising summer river, while the nature of emptiness dawns as great compassion, so infusing you with a loving compassion without any limit or bias. This is how it is, and: **“Meditation, the union of wisdom and love,”**

Once this key point on the path, the unity of emptiness and compassion, is directly realized, the ocean-like actions of the bodhisattvas, all included within the path of the six pāramitās, arise as its own natural energy, like the rays shining from the sun.

Since action is related to the accumulation of merit, anything you do will be for the benefit of others, helping you to avoid seeking peace and happiness for yourself alone, and so deviating from the correct view. So it: **“Is accompanied by the Action common to all the bodhisattvas”**.

This kind of view, meditation and action is the very core of the enlightened vision of all the buddhas who ever came, who are here now or who will ever come, and so: **“Were all the buddhas of past, present and future to confer,”**

The supreme peak of all the yantras, the key point on the path of the Vajra Heart Essence of the Nyingtik, the quintessence of all fruition—nothing surpasses this. And so: **“No instruction would they find greater than this”.**

The real meaning of what is expressed in this instruction is the heart-essence of the pith instructions of the lineage, it is certain; yet even the lines that express it, these few words, should arise, too, out of the creative power of rigpa. So: **“By the tertön of dharmakāya, the inner power of rigpa,”**

I have not the slightest experience of the actual meaning behind these words as a result of ‘the wisdom that comes from meditation’. Yet by hearing the unerring oral transmission of my holy master, I cleared away all doubts completely with ‘the wisdom that comes from listening’, and then came to a conclusive understanding through ‘the wisdom born of contemplation’, whereupon I composed this. And so it was: **“Brought out as a treasure from the depth of transcendental insight,”**

It is unlike any ordinary kind of worldly treasure, which might simply bring temporary relief from poverty. **“Nothing like ordinary treasures of earth and stone,”**

These three vital points of the view, known as *‘Hitting the Essence in Three Words’*, were given by the nirmanakaya Garab Dorje, from within a cloud of light in the sky as he passed into nirvāṇa, to the great master Mañjuśrīmitra. These are the very pith-instructions through which their realization became inseparable. **“For it is the final testament of Garab Dorje,”**

It was through penetrating to the essential meaning of this instruction that the omniscient king of Dharma, **Longchen Rabjam**, during his life-time directly realized the ‘wisdom mind’ of primordial purity, where all phenomena are exhausted and so awakened to complete and perfect buddhahood. Actually appearing in his wisdom body to the vidyādhara **Jikmé Lingpa**, he blessed him in the manner of the ‘sign transmission of the vidyādharas’. From him in turn, by means of ‘the transmission from mouth to ear’, our own kind root master, Jikmé Gyalwé Nyugu, received the introduction through this instruction, and encountered the true nature of reality face to face. And this is the instruction I heard from Jikmé Gyalwé Nyugu, while he was present among us as the glorious protector of all beings. That is why it is: **“The essence of the wisdom mind of the three transmissions”.**

Pith-instructions such as these are like the finest of gold, like the very core of the heart. It would be a pity to teach them to people who would not put them into practice.

But then again it would be a pity, too, not to teach them to a person who would cherish these instructions like his or her own life, put their essential meaning into practice, and attain buddhahood in a single lifetime. So:

**“It is entrusted to my heart-disciples, sealed to be secret.  
It is profound in meaning, my heart’s words.  
It is the words of my heart, the crucial key point.  
This crucial point, do not let it go to waste!  
Never let this instruction slip away from you!”**

With this brief commentary, *‘The Special Teaching of the Wise and Glorious King’* is complete at this point. Virtue! Virtue! Virtue!

| *Rigpa Translations, 2008.*

# Commentary on Some Terms from the Great Perfection

by *Dongak Chökyi Gyatso*

If we speak of understanding and realization in relation to the Great Perfection, I may lack realization, but, as the guru's compassionate light-rays have penetrated my heart ever so slightly, some understanding has arisen.

**Primordial purity** (*ka dag*) is of two kinds. Firstly, it refers to the purity that is the absence of any true stains within the extremely subtle energy-mind that is present as the ground. Secondly, it refers to the fact that the thought-processes that develop out of the delusion of non-realization are not an integral part of our basic character, in the way that heat is a property of fire, but are by nature utterly pure. Settling with this as the ground and applying the key points of the profound secret path of Thorough Cut, which is a direct cause that resembles the fruition, the wisdom of clear light in the enlightened mind of buddhahood, cuts any adventitious thought processes forcefully and directly, and brings us to the level of Unexcelled Wisdom (*ye shes bla ma*).

**Spontaneous presence** (*lhun grub*) refers to the fact that when we apply the path to aspects of our energy-mind, the kāyas and wisdoms arise merely through applying the key points, as these qualities, which have the character of fruitional enlightenment, have always been present intrinsically. Settling with this as the ground, and understanding the gateways for applying the key points of the profound secret path of the Crossover of spontaneous presence, which is a cause resembling all the features of the buddhas' rūpakāya, and actually applying those key points to energy and mind, without making any separation, causes the coarse physical body to be liberated into subtle space, and brings us to the citadel of great transference.

The **rigpa of the Great Perfection**, as my all-knowing guru asserted, is the 'path-rigpa'. Although in the sayings of the vidyādhara of old it might appear that it is the 'ground-rigpa', when we examine carefully we find that in this Dharma tradition, the rigpa of the Great Perfection is a recognition in which one experiences the ground exactly as it is, and there is therefore no path-rigpa that is distinct from the ground-rigpa. Then again, nobody would claim that the mere indeterminate ground-rigpa, which is present once we have strayed from the actual condition of the ground, is the rigpa of the Great Perfection. Thus, either assertion is feasible, depending upon the subtlety with which the terms are employed.

“**Great Perfection**” actually refers to the great perfection stage (*rdzogs rim*), but that is not how it is explained within the tradition. Instead, it is said that “Great Perfection” refers to the fact all the phenomena included within appearance and existence, or saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, are perfect within the absolute space of mind-as-

such (*sems nyid*). From an absolute perspective, this means that everything is merely the expression of mental imputation. While from a relative perspective, it means that all the appearances of the outer universe and its inhabitants, which are fabricated by the mind, are expressions of delusion and non-realization, as we have strayed from the ground. This means that these appearances manifest according to the fabrications of mind, while in reality mind itself is beyond arising and ceasing, and without basis or origin (*gzhi med rtsa bral*).

“**Rigpa**” is really the wisdom of clear light that is present latently in ordinary thought processes. Here it is not called “great bliss” (*mahāsukha*) or anything similar, as it is in the general language of Highest Yoga Tantra. This is because there is no need to rely on an approach in which taking bliss as the path is emphasised as the means for making wisdom manifest. On the contrary, it is through the method of settling naturally and effortlessly in the nature of the ground, just as it abides, that the wisdom of awareness is made to manifest directly, and that is why it is called “awareness”, or rigpa. It would appear, therefore, that it is on account of differences in method, as employed in the various paths associated with the perfection stage, that different names are used.

**Focusing on rigpa and rigpa alone** (*rig pa rkyang 'ded*) means that once we have recognized the rigpa of the Great Perfection, in which the actual character of the ground is experienced just as it is, there is no need to train in many different elements of the path. Simply sustaining that very face of awareness brings about all the functions associated with means and wisdom right away, which means that practising the yoga of this and this alone is similar to cultivating great bliss in the general mantra approach.

This is difficult to understand and can be a source of great confusion, so I shall explain it a little further. When a mind that has been matured through common bodhicitta and made flexible by uncommon deity yoga employs the method of the ‘four ways of leaving things as they are’ (*cog bzhag bzhi*) this brings about a clear separation between mind and rigpa. Then, when that face of awareness, which has been nakedly revealed, is sustained, any traces of method are further empowered. And when sustaining that face of awareness, without rejecting or cultivating whatever thoughts arise, these thoughts are liberated upon arising, leaving rigpa’s expressive power to unfold as a treasury of insight (*prajñā*). Therefore, as this single essence of rigpa contains within itself all the inconceivable power of means and wisdom, it is sufficient simply to focus on rigpa and rigpa alone. Without knowing this, however, simply to utter glib phrases, such as, “This is emptiness of which compassion is the very essence, so there is no need for anything else!” or, “This is the power of awareness!” or, “Not clinging at all is generosity,” is nothing more than delusion.

The most important method of the sūtra path is none other than the attitude of

striving for enlightenment for others' sake; while in the mantra approach, it is the yoga of arising as the deity in whom the profound and the manifest are united beyond duality. In Highest Yoga Tantra, in particular, when arising directly in rūpakāya form, the stains of adventitious thought-processes must be cleared away, as in the yoga of the rūpakāya, which is the “mind isolation” among the so-called “three empties” of the glorious *Guhyasamāja*, the direct cause of the illusory body. Here, however, if you understand how all the uncommon key points of deity yoga are included within the rigpa of Thorough Cut practice, wherein thought processes are forcefully cut through, you will come to understand how any traces of method are further empowered. This is a difficult point.

**Thorough Cut** (*khregs chod*) has the sense of forcefully cutting, and therefore refers to the means of settling whereby all thought processes and aspects of the ordinary mind are exhausted within the nature of rigpa, which is mind-as-such, as well as to the resolution of liberation upon arising.

**Crossover** (*thod rgal*) has the sense of passing over stages and reaching a summit directly. It therefore refers to the practice of the four visions, in which, unlike in the general deity yoga of the higher and lower tantras, the crucial points are applied to the gateways of spontaneous presence, which are rigpa's radiance, and the ‘glow’ (*mdangs*) of mind-as-such dawns as the rūpakāya. This is like the basis or pillar for determining the equivalents to the stages and paths of the uncommon approach of the Great Perfection.

In the context of settling in meditation, **bright** (*sa le*) means clear; **penetrating** (*hri ge*) means a refreshed or revitalized ‘standpoint’ of rigpa; **open** (*sang nge*) means without obstruction; and **naked** (*rjen ne*) means rigpa that has been laid bare following the clearing away of any obstructing factors. **Vivid** (*wal le*) means that naturally arising rigpa, which is mind-as-such, and in which there is an awareness of how all the phenomena of saṃsāra, nirvāṇa and the path are without basis or origin, is intensified both objectively and subjectively, so that the practitioner is led directly into its very essence, and does not succumb to factors such as delusion or dull indifference.

In the context of resolution, **self-liberation** (*rang grol*) means finding freedom in rigpa's own domain, without seeking any separate antidote; **liberation upon arising** (*shar grol*) means that all that arises is freed merely by virtue of its own arising; **primordial liberation** (*ye grol*) means that there is freedom within the primordial nature of each and every thought; **naked liberation** (*cer grol*) means that thoughts do not simply subside into themselves, but dissolve into the nature of dharmakāya, which is mind-as-such, so that repeatedly recognising them from the essence of awareness enhances rigpa-emptiness by stripping it or laying it bare.

Generally speaking, the term “**resolution**” (*la bzla*) includes the syllable “*la*” (‘mountain pass’), which is known universally as something difficult to traverse.

Similarly, here, the ‘pass’ of thoughts is difficult to cut through. And just as you might reach your chosen destination by crossing many passes, here in each session, you train repeatedly—the meaning of “*blza*”— with thoughts themselves by liberating them into their nature, which is dharmakāya. In this way, thoughts themselves can enhancement realization of the aware-emptiness that is the dharmakāya. This point is exceedingly important, as it concerns the uncommon means of taking clear light as the path within this tradition, and it is far more secret than what is often labelled ‘secret’. Without an understanding of this, there cannot be even the slightest hint of genuine Great Perfection practice. And in order to understand this and sustain it in practice you must have the ultimate view, according to which all the phenomena of saṃsāra, nirvāṇa and the path are without basis or origin in the unborn nature of your own mind. As there can be no means of practising at all without this, so everything comes down to the realization of this point.

Here are a few further ideas in this context. Through arriving at a definitive understanding of how all phenomena are unborn, and then becoming familiar with that realization of the unborn, you cut the chain of rebirth, thereby gaining liberation which is ‘without birth’. Similarly, as the natural state is utterly pure by its very nature, the darkness of delusion has always been ‘cleared away’ (*sangs*). Moreover, as all the qualities within the pure nature are just ready to arise based on the right conditions, they have always been developed (*rgyas*). By recognizing this, since all phenomena are and always have been utterly pure in their enlightened (or ‘clear and developed’, *sangs rgyas*) nature, when we practise the path we can take the result, in which the features of buddhahood arise, as the path, according to its conditions, which are knowledge and love. In a similar way, by arriving at a definitive understanding of how all phenomena are perfect within the kāya of the single, all-encompassing sphere, which is the dharmadhātu, any deluded perceptions and thoughts directed towards conditioned phenomena in all their variety are brought within the nature itself—and this constitutes an extremely unelaborate form of perfection stage practice.

Translated by Adam Pearcey, 2016



# Notes from the Oral Tradition on Ālaya, Ālaya Consciousness, etc.

by Yukhok Chatralwa Chöying Rangdrol

What we call the *ālaya* or ‘ground of all’ is of two kinds:

- First, there is the **primordial absolute ālaya**, which is what we call the *sugatagarbha*, the buddha-nature. This is the cause of vast, ocean-like qualities and the basis for the arising of the kāyas and wisdoms.
- Second, there is the **impure saṃsāric ālaya**, which is the basis for the arising of ordinary, tainted phenomena, such as the eight types of ordinary consciousness or ‘main mind’, the 51 mental states, and the 80 subtle indicative conceptions. This ālaya is like a container in which habitual traces from previous thoughts are stored, and also supports the arising of future thoughts.

The **ālaya consciousness** is the basis for the appearance of the five sensory consciousnesses, mental consciousness and tainted emotional mind. This all-ground consciousness is directed towards the vast outer world and its inhabitants, which do not fall into any ontological extreme, such as existing, not existing and so on. It does not discern the individual features of objects, such as their whiteness, blueness and so on.

As the **ālaya\*\*** is, in essence, free from the turbulence of gross conceptual thought, it is comparable to the ocean free of waves. If we abide by this one-pointedly and familiarise ourselves with such a state, we will be reborn in the Formless Realm. If we become more familiar with its clarity aspect—the fact that, in its essence, consciousness is not hidden from itself—we might be reborn not in the five realms of the āryas among the seventeen heavens of the Form Realm, but in the twelve higher levels reserved for ordinary beings. The weaker our familiarity however, the lower will be the location of our rebirth within the Form Realm.

Since the ālaya is free from conceptual thought, like a sky devoid of clouds, this consciousness in which habitual traces from earlier states of mind are stored, and which functions as a support for future states, is by its very nature peaceful, profound and extremely subtle. It is therefore exceedingly difficult to recognize, as is stated in the oral traditions of Lama Adzom,<sup>1</sup> Nyala<sup>2</sup> and Chakong.<sup>3</sup>

The great Omniscient One said, “Just as when we call out to someone whose mind then abides momentarily in a neutral state free from any thoughts—that is what the *ālaya* is like. Soon afterwards, the objects of perception appear, without obstruction, clearly and vividly, and without there being any clinging in our perception. That aspect of clarity devoid of thoughts is the *ālaya consciousness*.”

Lama Nyala said, “Imagine someone running across a vast plain while carrying a heavy pack. When the person stops to rest in the middle of the plain, the sheer force of their exhaustion will cause any thoughts to stop—and that state of freedom from thought is the ālaya.”

It is from the ālaya consciousness that the five sensory consciousnesses arise. Through them, conceptual mind consciousness develops, leading to the arising of the emotional mind.

For as long as the conceptual mind consciousness and emotional mind remain, the equilibrium that is present in the five sensory consciousnesses will not manifest. It is said that conceptual mind consciousness and emotional mind are more apparent; the five sensory consciousnesses are subtler; and the ālaya consciousness is extremely subtle.

The ālaya consciousness is characterised by developing and subsiding; the five sensory consciousnesses have the feature of arising and ceasing; while the mind consciousness and emotional mind are characterised by the duality of the grasping and the grasped.

In more detail, the types of consciousness with features similar to visual consciousness, which is said to illuminate seen forms unobstructedly, are the five sense doors.

You might wonder when it is that these forms of consciousness cease. For ordinary beings, they cease during sleep, when the faculties fail (i.e., unconsciousness), and at death. With the exception of these three occasions however, they are unceasing. When they do cease, it is the emotional mind which ceases first, then conceptual mind consciousness, then the five sensory consciousnesses, and finally the ālaya consciousness. If the ālaya consciousness did not cease, sleep, failure of the faculties and the moment of death could not occur.

When these forms of consciousness cease—according to whichever tradition we are following, be it Secret Mantra, Mahāmudrā or Dzogchen—this is said to mark the actual dawning of the ground luminosity. At that time, if we recognise our own nature, that is known as recognising clear light. But if we fail to recognise it, that is what we call ignorance, bewilderment, delusion, or the indeterminate (*lungmaten*).

When practitioners rest in meditation, if clear light dawns, they recognise it as dream-like. If you can do this, it is said, then you can be liberated by recognising luminosity at the moment of death.

Moreover, it is also taught that the eight types of ordinary consciousness cease on three occasions: 1) during the śrāvakas' absorption of cessation; 2) during the meditation of ārya bodhisattvas; and 3) when dualistic perceptions fade for practitioners of the mantrayāna.

Otherwise, if the five sensory consciousnesses, conceptual mental consciousness and emotional mind were to cease, it is said, we would not be able to carry out any virtuous or non-virtuous actions. The root tantra known as *Unimpeded Sound* says:

For the unerring meditation,  
The five senses must be clear.

As this indicates, when the five senses are in equilibrium, they have a quality of stillness or abiding. If we don't bring out the clarity from this stillness we could end up being reborn among the animals. Having brought out the clarity however, if we don't then accentuate the aspect of relaxation we might still be bound by fixation towards our own perceptions. The method for finding relaxation is to alternate between relaxation and alertness. If we can alternate like this again and again, the teachings say, then within about seven or eight days we will learn how to bring about relaxation.

When we bring out the quality of relaxation, we also find that there is an aspect of arising. We must bring about liberation within the arising, without prolonging rising thoughts. Unless we can bring about this freedom, we could stray into the Desire Realm. So, lacking these points, there are three possible pitfalls.

With mental consciousness, we could become attached to experiences of bliss, clarity and absence of thought, which would cause us to stray into the Three Realms. Then, among the five sensory perceptions, if we wander astray based on the visual consciousness, we will be reborn in the Form Realm. Thus, there are seven pitfalls, but it is said that we will avoid them all if we can rest perfectly with the five senses in equilibrium.

In addition, the objects of the **conceptual mental consciousness** involve both outward and inward clinging.

- *Outward clinging* means following the past, anticipating the future, and labelling outer and inner phenomena in the present moment. It consists of holding onto concretising notions about sights, sounds and so on.
- *Inward clinging* occurs during meditative equipoise, when the mind clings to blissful experience as bliss, clarity as clarity and absence of thought as emptiness.

The **tainted emotional mind** is responsible for the attachment and feelings of joy when the session is over, if it went well; or for aversion and feelings of unhappiness if it did not and we experienced dullness, agitation and the like.

Whenever we experience bliss, clarity or absence of thought, the subjective mind identifies and clings to the objective experience. It is said that through the force of becoming accustomed to this again and again, object and subject can merge together indivisibly so that we remain without thought.

Now then, you must:

- Begin by taking refuge and arousing bodhicitta.
- Then, in the middle phase of the practice, allow the five sense doors to remain open and expansive.
- If you experience stillness, accentuate vivid clarity. If there is clarity, bring more relaxation.
- If thoughts arise, allow them to be liberated.

Seal your practice with these principles. At the end, before the ‘seal’ of the practice is broken, dedicate the merit. By practising in this way, it is taught, you will avoid obstacles and pitfalls.

Alternatively, even if you cannot recognise the equilibrium of sensory experience, begin with refuge and bodhicitta. And then, having purified thoughts:

- bring vivid clarity whenever there is stillness,
- relaxation whenever there is clarity, and
- liberation whenever thoughts arise.

Finally, dedicate the merit at the end. That is fine too and will suffice as meditation, it is said.

*May all be auspicious!*

Translated by Adam Pearcey, 2016. With thanks to Alak Zenkar Rinpoche and Patrick Gaffney.

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1. Adzom Drukpa ↔
2. Most likely Tertön Sogyal Lerab Lingpa ↔
3. Dudjom Lingpa ↔

འོ་ལྷོ་ཆེན་སྤྱི་གི་བྲིག་ལེ་ལས་ཅུ་གཞི་ལམ་འབྲས་བུའི་སྣོན་ལམ་བཟུགས་ཅུ་

The Prayer of the Ground, Path & Fruition

From the Heart Essence of the Vast Expanse

དཔལ་ཀུན་ཏུ་བཟང་པོ་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ་ཅུ་

*Homage to glorious Samantabhadra!*

གདོད་མའི་གནས་ལུགས་རང་བཞིན་སྤྱོད་དང་བྲལ་ཅུ་

dömé neluk rangshyin trö dangdral

The true nature of things is naturally free of conceptual projections.

ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་རྒྱལ་བས་འདི་མ་གཟིགས་ཅུ་

yöpa mayin gyalwé di ma zik

It does not exist, since even the victorious ones do not see it.

མེད་པ་མ་ཡིན་འཁོར་འདས་ཀུན་གྱི་གཞི་ཅུ་

mepa mayin khordé kün gyi shyi

Yet neither is it non-existent, as it is the ground of all samsara and nirvana.

འགལ་འདུ་མ་ཡིན་བཟོད་བྱའི་ཡུལ་ལས་འདས་ཅུ་

galdu mayin jöjé yul lé dé

There is no contradiction here, for it lies beyond the realm of expression.

རྫོགས་ཆེན་གཞི་ཡི་གནས་ལུགས་རྫོགས་པར་ཤོག་ཅུ་

dzogchen shyi yi neluk tokpar shok

May all realize this Great Perfection, the true nature of the ground!

ངོ་བོ་སྣོད་པས་རྟག་པའི་མཐའ་ལས་གྲོལ་ཅུ་

ngowo tongpé takpé ta lé drol

In essence it is empty, hence free from the limitations of permanence.

རང་བཞིན་གསལ་བས་ཆད་པའི་སྤུ་དང་བྲལ་ཅུ་

rangshyin salwé chepé mu dangdral

By nature it is clear, and free from the limitations of nihilism.

བྱུགས་རྗེ་འགག་མེད་སྣེ་ཚོགས་སྤྱལ་པའི་གཞི་ཅུ་

tukjé gakmé natsok trulpé shyi

Its capacity unobstructed, it is the ground of manifold emanations.

གསུམ་དུ་དབྱེ་ཡང་དོན་ལ་ཐ་མི་དད་ཅུ་

sum du yé yang dön la ta mi dé

It is divided into three, yet in truth there are no such differentiations.

རྫོགས་ཆེན་གཞི་ཡི་གནས་ལུགས་རྫོགས་པར་ཤོག།

dzogchen shyi yi neluk tokpar shok

May all realize this Great Perfection, the true nature of the ground!

བསམ་གྱིས་མི་བྲལ་སྣོ་འདོགས་ཀྱན་དང་བྲལ།

sam gyi mi khyab drondok kün dangdral

Inconceivable and free of all superimposition, one-sided fixation

ཡོད་དང་མེད་པའི་ཕྱོགས་འཛིན་རྣམ་པར་ཞིག།

yö dang mepé chok dzin nampar shyik

On things being either existent or non-existent completely dissolves.

འདི་དོན་བརྗོད་ལ་རྒྱལ་བའི་ལྷགས་ཀྱང་རྟུགས།

di dön jö la gyalwé jak kyang duk

The full import of this turns back even the tongue of the victors.

ཐོག་མཐའ་བར་མེད་གཏིང་གསལ་ཆེན་པོའི་དབྱིངས།

tok ta bar mé tingsal chenpö ying

Without beginning, middle, or end, it is a great expanse of deep clarity.

རྫོགས་ཆེན་གཞི་ཡི་གནས་ལུགས་རྫོགས་པར་ཤོག།

dzogchen shyi yi neluk tokpar shok

May all realize this Great Perfection, the true nature of the ground!

རང་ངོ་རྣམ་དག་སྐྱེ་མེད་ཀ་དག་ལ།

rang ngo namdak kyemé kadak la

Its essence is pristine, unoriginated, and primordially pure.

སྣོན་གྲུབ་འདུས་མ་བྱས་པའི་གདངས་ཤར་བ།

lhündrub dümajepé dang sharwa

Whatever manifests is the expression of this unconditioned spontaneous presence.

གུད་དུ་མ་བཟུང་རིག་སྣོང་བྱུང་འཇུག་ཆེར།

güdu ma zung riktong zungjuk cher

Without perceiving them as other, realizing the great unity of awareness-emptiness,

རྫོགས་པས་གཞི་ཡི་དགོངས་པ་ཚད་དུ་ཕྱིན།

tokpé shyi yi gongpa tsé du chin

One's understanding of the ground will reach a point of culmination.

ལམ་གྱི་གནད་ལ་གོལ་ཕྱོགས་མེད་པར་ཤོག།

lam gyi né la gol chok mepar shok

May there be no deviations and mistakes concerning this key point of the path!

ཡེ་ནས་དག་པས་ལྷ་བའི་མིང་ཡང་མེད་ཅེ་  
yené dakpé tawé ming yangmé  
Pure from the beginning, even the term “view” does not exist.

རང་ངོ་རིག་པས་སྒོམ་རྒྱའི་འབྲས་ནས་འདོན་ཅེ་  
rang ngo rigpé gom gyü shub né dön  
Aware of the original state, the sheath of meditation falls away.

གཟའ་གཏང་མེད་པས་སྤྱོད་པའི་སྤྱོད་དང་བྲལ་ཅེ་  
zaté mepé chöpe drok dangdral  
There are no reference points, hence no need to restrain one’s conduct.

རང་བཞིན་ལྷུ་མས་ལུགས་སྤྱོད་བྲལ་རྗེན་པའི་ངང་ཅེ་  
rangshyin lhum shyuk trödral jenpé ngang  
In the spontaneously present nature, this state of naked simplicity,

ལམ་གྱི་གནད་ལ་གོལ་ཕྱོགས་མེད་པར་ཤོག་ཅེ་  
lam gyi né la gol chok mepar shok  
May there be no deviations and mistakes concerning this key point of the path!

བཟང་ངན་རྣམ་ཏོག་ཕྱོགས་སུ་མ་ལྷུང་ཞིང་ཅེ་  
zang ngen namtok chok su ma lhung shyang  
Not falling into partiality towards positive thoughts or negative ones,

བཏང་སྤྱོད་མས་ལུང་མ་བསྟན་དུ་མ་འབྲམས་པར་ཅེ་  
tangnyom lungmaten du ma jampar  
And without giving free rein to a state of indifferent neutrality,

ཤར་གྲོལ་རིས་མེད་རྒྱ་ཡན་ལྷན་འབྲམས་གྲོང་ཅེ་  
shardrol rimé gya yen lhün jam long  
Manifestation and liberation—an expanse unrestricted, unbridled, and spontaneously free.

སྤང་སྤང་ཡེ་བཟད་རང་བཞིན་ཡོངས་ཤེས་ངང་ཅེ་  
panglang yé zé rangshyin yong shé ngang  
Understanding that the nature is inherently devoid of needing to accept and reject,

ལམ་གྱི་གནད་ལ་གོལ་ཕྱོགས་མེད་པར་ཤོག་ཅེ་  
lam gyi né la gol chok mepar shok  
May there be no deviations and mistakes concerning this key point of the path!

ཐོག་མའི་སྤྱི་གཞི་ནམ་མཁའ་ལྷ་སུའི་ངང་ཅེ་  
tokmé chi shyi namkha tabü ngang  
Like space, awareness is the universal ground and starting point.

གཤམ་སྣང་རིག་པ་མཁའ་ལ་སླིན་དེངས་བཞིན།  
shyi nang rigpa kha la trin deng shyin  
Manifest ground spontaneously present, yet vanishing like clouds in the sky,

ཕྱི་གསལ་ཤེས་པ་ནང་དུ་ལྷོག་པ་ལས།  
chisal shepa nang du dokpa lé  
The mind radiates out, projecting outwards and then returning within

ལྷན་ཚེས་དུག་ལྡན་གཞོན་ལུ་བུམ་སྐྱེའི་སྐབས།  
khyechö drukden shyönnu bumkü bub  
To the youthful vase body's inner space, possessing six unique characteristics—

འབྲས་བུའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་བཙན་ས་བེན་པར་ཤོག།  
drebü gyalpo tsensa zinpar shok  
May all seize the throne of this majestic fruition!

ཡེ་ནས་རང་རིག་ཀུན་ཏུ་བཟང་པོ་ལ།  
yéné rangrik kuntuzangpo la  
From the very beginning, awareness itself is Samantabhadra.

ཐོབ་བྱའི་ཞེ་འདོད་མཐའ་དག་དབྱིངས་སུ་ཡལ།  
tob jé shendö tadak ying su yal  
Within it, all hoping for attainments dissolves into the sphere of reality,

བྱ་ཚོལ་སློ་འདས་ཇོགས་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་གཤམ་སྣང་།  
jatsol lodé dzokpa chenpö shi  
The true character of the Great Perfection, beyond intentional effort;

དབྱིངས་རིག་ཀུན་ཏུ་བཟང་མོའི་མཁའ་གློང་སྐབས།  
yingrik kuntuzangmö kha long bub  
The sphere of reality and awareness, the inner space of Samantabhadri—

འབྲས་བུའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་བཙན་ས་བེན་པར་ཤོག།  
drebü gyalpo tsensa zinpar shok  
May all seize the throne of this majestic fruition!

རབ་ཏུ་མི་གནས་དབུ་མ་ཆེན་པོའི་དོན།  
rabtu miné uma chenpö dön  
Utterly non-abiding—the nature of the Great Middle Way;

ལྷབ་གདལ་ལྷན་འབྲམས་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོའི་ངང་།  
khyab dal lhün jam chakgya chenpö ngang  
All-embracing and spontaneously vast—the state of Mahamudra;



མཐའ་གྲོལ་གློང་ཡངས་ཚྗགས་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་གནད་ཅེས་།

ta drol long yang dzokpa chenpö né

Freed from limitations and wide open—the key point of the Great Perfection.

ས་ལམ་ཡོན་ཏན་གཞིར་ཚྗགས་ལྷན་གྱུ་བ་སྐྱབས་ཅེས་།

salam yönten shyir dzok lhündrub bub

The virtues of the levels and paths fundamentally complete—spontaneously present inner space.

འབྲས་བུའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་བཅན་ས་ཟིན་པར་ཤོག་ཅེས་།

drebü gyalpo tsensa zinpar shok

May all seize the throne of this majestic fruition!

ཐུགས་བརྩུད་གློང་ཆེན་ཟབ་རྒྱ་ཡི་།

*This profound prayer, a summation of the seal*

མཐའ་སྤྱད་སློན་ལམ་ཟབ་མོ་འདི་།

*Of the quintessential vast expanse,*

བཀའ་སྤྱད་བྲང་སྤོང་རུ་རྒྱ་ཡི་།

*Was set down at the behest of the protector of the teachings,*

བརྗེའི་ཚུལ་གྱིས་བསྐྱུལ་ནས་བཀོད་ཅེས་།

*The Rishi Rahula, who took the form of a monk.*

ཟབ་དོན་སྤེལ་བ་དོན་ཡིད་ཅིང་།

*To make meaningful the spread of the profound reality*

ཉེན་འབྲེལ་སློན་ལམ་མཐར་ཕྱིན་ཕྱིར་།

*And bring to perfection this prayer of interdependence,*

ནམ་མཁའི་སྣང་པོས་བྱིན་རྒྱ་བས་པའི་།

*I let loose this profound seal to the mad yogi of Kong.*

ཀོང་སློན་སྐྱེས་པའི་རིག་འཛིན་ལ་།

*Entrusting it to this hidden master of awareness*

ཟབ་རྒྱ་བཀོལ་ཏེ་གཏད་རྒྱ་བྱས་ཅེས་།

*Who himself has been blessed by Akashagarbha.*

འགྲོ་དོན་ནམ་མཁའ་མཉམ་པར་ཤོག་ཅེས་། །

*May its benefit for beings equal the extent of space!*

*| Translated by Cortland Dahl, 2006.*

# Prayer to Nyala Pema Dündul

*Homage to the Guru!*

Just like all the great siddhas and buddhas of the past,  
You underwent all manner of hardship,  
And then, from the Jewel Peak of Lhangdrak,  
Brought down a rain of Dharma teachings on Mahāmudrā, Dzogpachenpo and the  
Great Middle Way—  
To you, the ‘stone-eating’ yogin,<sup>1</sup> I pray!  
Grant your blessings so that, like you, I may realize natural simplicity, beyond  
concepts!  
Grant your blessings so that I may turn away from attachment to samsara!  
Grant your blessings so that the tight knot of my ego-clinging may be released!  
Grant your blessings so that I may be freed from all my dualistic fixations!  
Grant your blessings so that I may break through this mass of attachment and  
aversion!  
Grant your blessings so that the five poisons may be purified naturally in their own  
state!  
Grant your blessings so that I may experience happiness and suffering as being of a  
single taste!  
Grant your blessings so that I may fully understand death and impermanence!  
Grant your blessings so that I may recognize all the beings of the six realms as my  
own parents!  
Grant your blessings so that the tight knot of my miserliness may be loosened!  
Grant your blessings so that I may see the illusory nature of food and possessions!  
Grant your blessings so that I may keep to pleasant mountain retreats!  
Grant your blessings so that all my perceptions may dawn as the master!  
Grant your blessings so that my cave may appear as the blissful Sukhāvati!  
Grant your blessings so that I may perfect the seven ways of remaining unaltered!<sup>2</sup>  
Grant your blessings so that there may be no tightness or looseness in my view!  
Grant your blessings so that my meditation may arise continuously!  
Grant your blessings so that my action is beyond accepting and rejecting!  
Grant your blessings so that I have no fears or hopes for the result!  
Grant your blessings so that I reach the very limit of the four levels of confidence!<sup>3</sup>

*Although it is inappropriate for a person to compose a prayer such as this, addressing it to him or herself, at the persistent urging of many fortunate holy beings, this was written by the widely renowned yet blind and foolish ignoramus Pema Dündul.*

| Translated by Adam Pearcey, [Rigpa Translations](#), 2005. Thanks to Lodi Gyari Rinpoche for providing the Tibetan text.

1. Nyala Pema Dündul spent three years doing a special practice of ‘extracting the vital essence’ (*bcud len, chü len*) using small stones, after which he became known as the ‘stone-eating yogin’. ↩
2. Requires an explanation from a qualified Dzogchen master. ↩
3. Requires an explanation from a qualified Dzogchen master. ↩



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**LOTSAWA HOUSE**

DHARMA. ON THE HOUSE.