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II. Translation

A Twelfth-century Tibetan Classic of Mahāmudrā, *The Path of Ultimate Profundity: The Great Seal Instructions of Zhang**

by Dan Martin

Introduction

Zhang Rin-po-che, often known as Zhang G.yu-brag-pa Brtson-'grus-grags-pa, or simply Bla-ma Zhang,¹ is surely one of the most interesting and enigmatic figures in the early history of the Tibetan Buddhist order known as the Bka'-brgyud-pa, founded by Mar-pa the Translator.² Mar-pa based his teachings on those he received in India from his tantric masters, Nāropa³ and Maitrīpa⁴ in particular. These teachings combined the Six Dharmas especially connected with the name of Nāropa and the Mahāmudrā or "Great Seal"⁵ teachings connected with both Nāropa and Maitrīpa. Among Mar-pa's followers, the most celebrated by far was Mi-la-ras-pa.⁶ It was a disciple of Mi-la-ras-pa, Dwags-po Lha-rje (Sgam-po-pa Zla-'od-gzhon-nu, 1079-1153 A.D.) who made the yogic contemplative teachings and practices of his predecessors enter the world of monastic discipline by "joining the two streams" of Bka'-gdams-pa teachings from Atiśa with his spiritual inheritance from Mi-la-ras-pa.⁷ Although some purists would take issue with this "mixing," and we think in particular of Sa-skya Paṇḍi-ta, it may be more apropos to question whether, taken singly, each of the three traditions (Six Dharmas, Great Seal, and Bka'-gdams-pa as well as Great Perfection) is Buddhist. If so, then it is an unremarkable case of mixing apples with apples, even, we might add, if some of the apples could have come from Chinese Buddhism. In the case of Zhang Rin-po-che, who is linked to the Bka'-brgyud lineage through Dwags-po

Lha-rje's nephew Sgom-tshul, the most immediate inspiration for his work, as we will see, was an Orrisan Buddhist of the *siddha*-type, one who had recently spent some time in China.

The later controversies are not of much concern to us here,⁹ and in fact there is a distinct danger of reading the early Bka'-brgyud-pa literature, and particularly the literature of the Great Seal, through the lenses of those controversies. If we nevertheless insist on controversy, this should at least be postponed until we may justifiably claim valid and well-founded insights into the tradition that would be the object of contention. The very proper philological goal of "tracing each tradition" must be accompanied by a more phenomenological goal of "knowing each tradition." If we were to immediately take the critical approach of analyzing statements and underlining perceived contradictions, we would risk setting up a straw man opposition of our own making or, what is a more serious matter, a closure in our ability to understand that would more than likely be premature, particularly given the inherent problematics involved in approaching a subject like Mahāmudrā which rebuffs in no uncertain terms any such philological or phenomenological advances on its citadel.

Therefore, in this brief discussion offered by way of introduction to a translation of a work by Zhang Rin-po-che, *The Path of Ultimate Profundity*,¹⁰ we have chosen to underline certain points that are emphasized within the primary work itself. Our main secondary work of reference will be a work of the same order (although not the same genre) belonging to the same tradition, but probably somewhat prior to the work by Zhang Rin-po-che, Sgam-po-pa's *Responses to the Questions of Lord Phag-mo-gru-pa (Rje Phag-mo-gru-pa'i Zhus-lan*, henceforth referred to as *Phag-gru Zhus-lan*).¹¹

The title of Zhang Rin-po-che's work already indicates the level of discourse that might be expected. The word "Ultimate" (*mthar thug*) indicates the Goal. In the *Phag-gru Zhus-lan* (p. 29.4), a distinction is made between Path Mahāmudrā and Ultimate Mahāmudrā. The latter is designated as

a condition in which there is neither acceptance nor rejection, since the Great Total Knowledge of the non-duality of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* has been realized. Since this is the true intention of all *buddhas*, it is not to be sought for in anything apart from Buddhahood itself.¹²

We might then presume that this ultimate viewpoint will be the one consistently adopted in Zhang Rin-po-che's work as a whole. However, in the very first line following the initial verse of invocation, we are immediately forewarned that what we will find there is "a mere peripheral indication" (*zur mtshon tsam zhig*).

That this "ultimate Mahāmudrā" is characterized in the preceding quote as a *realization* (*rtogs pa*) is a point of utmost importance for our reading of the text as a whole. We should refine our understanding of this "realization" by first recognizing that it is neither an "understanding" (*go*) nor an "experience" (*nyams*).¹³ So let us begin with "understanding" even if, as we will quickly come to discover, it does not get us very far in this context.

In the *Dus-mkhyen Zhus-lan* (pp. 124-5), Sgam-po-pa says,

Generally speaking, there are two styles at work in religion. These two are the "philosophical" (*mtshan nyid*) which is effective for knowing/perceiving, and the "realizational" (*rtogs pa*) which is effective for attainment. The activities of learning and pondering in themselves constitute a method, but this must not turn into [a method for] facilitating afflictive emotions. This would be to cut off the goal of knowing, and at bottom it is of no help. Even those who have not cultivated themselves in the path of the insights (*shes rab*) that come through learning and pondering may yet be enabled to give birth to realizations if, after encountering a reliable Lama, they carry out that Lama's advice. I need not repeat that this involves a pure renunciation of this-worldly thoughts. One needs to forget all the technical terms of the treatises (*bstan bcos kyi tha snyad*). Those whose learning is extensive are acute in words, but obtuse in meanings. Their talents turn into faults.¹⁴

One's immediate reaction may be to discount Mahāmudrā as something beyond understanding, thus effectively putting an end to our phenomenological (but still, certainly, text-based) attempt at understanding. We must at least be precise and clear about the sort

of understanding that Sgam-po-pa and Zhang Rin-po-che discount as insufficient. It is, first of all, “textual” understanding — texts being the “societies of words” (*tshig tshogs*, which I have more conservatively rendered “clumps of words” in the following translation) pursued for their own sake without reference to any meaning outside themselves, but rather viewed exclusively along the lines of the internal interrelationships of the terms and categories. Zhang Rin-po-che says,

Uttering clumps of words such as these¹³ does not touch on it.
Clumps of words, however acute and profound,
have been pronounced in many accounts,
but are incapable of touching the real condition of mind.¹⁴

Naturally, Zhang Rin-po-che acknowledges his own text to be a “society of words,”

Do not mull over these expressions of mine.
Understand that they are like the finger that points out the moon.
Knowing this, the clumps of conventional words
will not get in the way, will not veil understanding with verbal faults.
So, without giving up words and investigations,
take pride in the meaning and do not get attached.¹⁵

He is not opposed to study,¹⁶ only to philological fixations that end up in a pride (intellectual mastery or authority as an end in itself) that obstructs further comprehensions,

Religious people in these bad times of the present
have little of the inner discipline that comes from study.
Even those who are learned in clumps of words
have not realized their significances.
In the future, their proud contentions will increase.
The revered Lamas of the accomplishment transmission
pursued meanings and became accomplished.
Permanently renouncing such things as pride,
understanding meanings was the only skill
in scriptural authority and reasonings they required.¹⁷

In short, neither verbal expression (philology) nor mental investigation (philosophical theorizing, etc.) touch on the real condition. They fall short of the mark, and

While falling short of the mark does not mean an end to development, following what has not entered deep within will give rise to dis-ease. Those contemplators who have mastered mind-made philosophies will be invaded by the chronic disease of partiality.²⁰

In fact, our English word “understanding” might serve as valid translations for at least three different Tibetan words: *go*, meaning philologically and philosophically derived understandings; *shes* meaning understandings or knowledges arrived at through mental and perceptual faculties (“learning”), and *rtogs* which we have rendered “realization.” The main difference between realization and other types of understandings is that, in the case of realization, meditative experiences (*nyams*, or, *nyams myong*) intervene. Meditative experiences and realization both would tend to arise when following a course of meditation practices. But there are crucial differences between them. Meditative experiences are, although this is not asserted to be a universally applicable “rule,” preconditions for the arising of realization, but in themselves meditative experiences are compounded phenomena, and therefore temporary and unstable. Zhang Rin-po-che speaks of “the dawning of realization from the midst of meditative experiences.”

Fortunately for us, Phag-mo-gru-pa placed the question to Sgam-po-pa, “What is the difference between meditative experiences and realization?” Sgam-po-pa answered that experiences do not transcend certain mental aspects, that they are like the sun through a crack in the clouds. Experiences are made up of three independently variable factors; bliss, clarity and absence of troubling thoughts.²¹ Tending these experiences without attachment, mental defilements are refined away. Then the original realization dawns.²²

Zhang Rin-po-che says,

If it is a question of which is most important, realization or meditative experiences,

then it is realization that is important, not meditative experiences.
 No matter how fine the meditative experience,
 in the absence of realization there can be no liberation.²³

And he also says,

All experiences are compounded things.
 All compounded things are impermanent, will fall apart.
 Therefore, without being attached to meditative experiences,
 realize the non-dual Total Knowledge.
 Complete *nirvāṇa* is under the purview of realization exclusively.²⁴

Zhang Rin-po-che has much to say about the importance (as well as the insufficiency) of meditative experiences, but at a certain point in the practice of meditation these experiences may constitute an extremely difficult obstacle to overcome, a “honey trap” as we will see.

The last major topic which we will attempt to explicate, which seems to be an essential key to understanding, is the idea of the Four Yogas (*rnal 'byor bzhi*),²⁵ which are presented as different points of time in meditative practice. On initial consideration, this idea of Four Yogas may seem difficult to accommodate within an “absolutist” system such as that promised in the title of Zhang Rin-po-che’s work, a system in which “by knowing the one thing, everything is disentangled” (*cig shes kun grol*), the idea of the “white self-sufficient medicinal” which has been ably investigated elsewhere.²⁶ A charge that such an “absolutist” system is untrue to itself when any idea of “levels” or “stages” is mentioned would be essentially unfair. This would be to demand more than is deemed possible to deliver. Zhang Rin-po-che is doing his level best to portray to his target audience (meaning his own disciples and later followers of his tradition) what the ultimate standpoint must be like, but he is also pointing out ways to get to that standpoint. Proponents of “law and order” in religion (including students of religion who insist on the same constituting the true core of religious phenomena) may be troubled by the degree to which he (following the early Bka’-brgyud-pa Great Seal tradition as a whole) relativizes the Paths and

their stages (see the beginning of chapter 4).²⁷ Yet, a great deal of the text is devoted to the orderly unfolding of the stages of the Path of those who are gradualists. The Four Yogas themselves may likewise be understood as stages, even if they are scarcely ever referred to as such.²⁸ What makes them more central to Zhang Rin-po-che's work (and the Mahāmudrā tradition of the early Bka'-brgyud-pa in general) is that they describe a "bare bones" outline of the unfoldment of the meditative life which, according to them, culminates in the realization of the actual condition of mind, which is in itself sufficient. They in fact prefer the meditative to the phenomenological approach, since the "phenomenological" Dharma Proper (*Chos-nyid*) is taken care of by the meditative realization of Mind Proper (*Sems-nyid*). Phag-mo-gru-pa said,

The learned scholars cut away the veils [of words] with words and establish the objects of knowing... Make forests into pens, oceans into ink, land into paper, and still there would be no end to their writing. Yogins do not establish external objectivities; they establish the mind. The mind established, its objects establish themselves.²⁹

Sgam-po-pa says, in answer to a question about whether the Great Seal teachings differentiate Dharma Proper and Mind Proper,

They are the same. The light of mind is Dharma Proper, so through realization of Mind Proper, Dharma Proper realization is taken care of (loosens its own bonds)... Exclusive meditation on the substance of mind is sufficient.³⁰

There will certainly be other Buddhists who will take issue with this idea of the self-sufficiency of meditation, but I doubt that any would deny its importance. The Four Yogas are simply the preferred model for meditative developments used by the followers of Mahāmudrā. As such, they hold exceptional interest for all who take an interest, of any sort, in meditation. We will now briefly survey the Four Yogas, based on three passages in the *Phag-gru Zhus-lan*.³¹

I. ONE-POINTED YOGA (*rtse gcig rnal 'byor*): However many mental effusions might at first take place in this yoga, the inner propulsions for troubling thoughts are lessened. Their lessening makes Mind Proper progressively evident, and this wears away all the defilements. Fierce faith, devotion and dedication are required at this point. The practitioner must go for meditation like a thirsty man for water. During this time, everyone has the experience of thinking that they are not meditating,³² but they have to keep trying.³³

In this one must give birth to the certainty that reflexive awareness is unmoved by troubling thoughts, not at all worked on, and with nothing at all to think about—that this is the King of Concentrations. This yoga occurs to some people, but they do not perceive it to be so, thinking that this meditation consists in having an object of concentration, or in having spiritual experiences. Some even think they are supposed to become like a corpse with troubling thoughts stopped up and phenomenal things sinking away. That is not how it is.³⁴

II. UNFISSURED INTEGRAL YOGA (*spros bral rnal 'byor*): There is an experience showing that perceptions have no basis, that no basis can be found. The substance of awareness has become free of fissures, as if peeled of peelings, as if one has gotten to the kernel of reality. One thinks one has discovered something unfound, or perceived something unknown. One finds a growing and unmitigated joy as if a poor man who gets a treasure in his hand. The mind experiences a clear joy, a clear happiness. Pursuing this further, confusing thoughts are cleared up. The mind is freed of compulsive practices and turns to unfissured integral awareness. This is the Unfissured Integral Yoga.³⁵

One must produce the special certainty that all *dharma*s of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are purified on their own ground after being assured that Mind Proper has no production, and that

all *dharmas* of *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are projections of one's own mind.³⁶

III. QUALITATIVE EQUIVALENCE YOGA (*ro gcig rnal 'byor*): Even when one directs the mind toward phenomena, it does not go out to them, but the phenomena are neither obstructed nor fixated upon. All phenomena experienced [in post-meditation]³⁷ become unclassifiable.³⁸ Sustaining this meditation is the dawning from within of the Qualitative Equivalence yoga.³⁹

One needs certainty about Dharma Proper—that mental phenomena are awareness' energy manifestations. Even when all kinds of troubling thoughts are racing about, one need not rely on anything other as an antidote. Since the troubling thoughts themselves demonstrate that they cannot be established in truth or permanency, in reality they have not arisen.⁴⁰

IV. NON-MEDITATION YOGA (*sgom med rnal 'byor*): Upon the appearance of troubling thoughts, there is no need for awareness to take action and make them more or less than they are. Rather, they are all experienced as identical with mind, and this in and of itself is sufficient. This [initially] brings an increase of thought phenomena, but these are seen as projections of mind, and finally they disappear of themselves.⁴¹ Sustaining this for a length of time is the non-meditation yoga, in which all phenomena dawn as clear light Dharma Proper. In fact, no troubling thought of emotion, passion, etc., can arise without clear light Dharma Proper dawning simultaneously. This occurs whether one meditates or not, there being no meditative equipoise or post-meditation. It is also called the Yoga of the Great Meditative Equipoise (*mnyam gzhas chen po'i rnal 'byor*).⁴²

All the troubling thoughts of the mind, experiences in meditation, and insights of realization dissolve into the Realm through the power of seeing their substance. Here one needs

to give open birth to the certainty of recognizing ordinary perception, without working on it, as Dharma Proper.”⁴³

A further passage indicates what are the most crucial things for each of the Four Yogas:

1. Giving up entertainments and being persistent.
2. Having the courage to view everything dispassionately.
3. The inner meditative experience itself, without getting mixed up with the general aspects of the thing to be understood.
4. Not getting stuck in the glue of meditative experience.”⁴⁴

The final aim of this meditative unfoldment is the “Great Impression,” or “Great Seal.” Kong-sprul explains this in a very succinct fashion, “Coupling (*zung du ’jug pa*) is the Seal, and because all *dharmas* (all phenomena) are embraced in this coupling, it is Great. Nothing is beyond it.”⁴⁵

The meditation centeredness of the Mahāmudrā view is no liability from the viewpoint of its adherents, neither need it be considered a liability by its students. Every view has something — the structures of the human mind, social organization, words, syntax, atoms, gods, kinship, illusions, gender, psychic unity, nothingness — that everything in the system builds on and that then, in the end, it all boils down to. If Mahāmudrā differs from other types of views it would be in part at least because the something it bases itself on does not seem to supply a very stable cornerstone for a monumental structure of thought. The absence of troubling thought (*mi rtog pa*) has no validity at the time of One-pointed Yoga, is part of the mix that characterizes meditative experiences later on, and finally occurs on its own in Non-meditation Yoga as an important way of characterizing the Goal. Epistemologically speaking, meditation brings significant shifts in perspective — modulations of the human mind, transformations in the status of the knowing faculties vis à vis the things known — which make it difficult for those with other assumptions, assumptions on the autonomy and stability of the

knowing subject, to pin it down within their systems. Those of us who use philological, anthropological, philosophical and phenomenological approaches can and should take heed of such alternative voices as those of the early Bka'-brgyud-pa and allow them to have their say. This might prod us to ponder the the possible insufficiency of our approaches, to face with a more realistic humility the range of possible knowables, and of possible ways to go about knowing them.

Before bringing this introduction to a close, it may be helpful to add a few words about Zhang Rinpoche's early life and the circumstances leading up to the composition of this work. He was born in 1122-3 in Central Tibet, not far to the east of Lhasa. While he descended from the illustrious Sna-nam Zhang family, we cannot know if his family was rich or poor. It seems that his mother was a former nun who recognized the value of education. She, together with an elder brother, taught him to read and write. from about age nine through age eighteen, he studied various *sūtras*, *tantras* and treatises with at least three different teachers. Something happened to him at age eighteen, and he began a three-year period of destructive ritual magic employing goat sacrifices. As he says in an autobiography, "I purchased a black goat and killed it in order to work an evil spell. This in itself proved to be a truly evil curse, and there was no magical result, but rather my parents died and, in my dejection, I went wandering down to Khams.""

In his twenty-third year he took the vows of a Buddhist layperson, including a vow of celibacy. Nevertheless, he indulged once more in a "black magic" ritual. In his twenty-sixth year, while reading *sūtras* at a funeral service, he felt a genuine aversion against worldly life, and in the late spring of the year 1148 he took monastic vows. Not long after this he met one of his more important spiritual teachers, the translator of Rga. Rga conferred upon him the initiations into the mandala of Cakrasaṃvara. He stayed in retreat doing yogic postures, breathing exercises and meditation in various remote sites. His teachers were many, but most important both for his spiritual advancement and later career was Sgom-tshul, a nephew of the more famous Sgam-po-pa. His meeting with Sgom-tshul in

about 1154 was accompanied with a flood of realization, and he received the lineage of the Bka'-brgyud masters, soon becoming both capable and authorized to teach in his own right.

It was sometime during the next several years, perhaps in about 1161 to 1164, that the *Path of Ultimate Profundity* was composed. This we know from the *Rgyal-blon-ma*, a biography composed by one or more of his disciples, evidently not long after his death in 1193. According to the *Rgyal-blon-ma* account, he went to visit a great lama named 'Bhe'-ro to request Cakrasaṃvara initiations, as well as precepts on the *dohās*, the often highly symbolic songs of realization sung by the Indian *mahāsiddhas*. Immediately thereafter, he went to Phyi-khungs (Spyi-khungs). He was performing consecration rituals for a *mchod-rten* and protector temple (*mgon khang*) there when a female patron named Gzungsgron-ma asked to receive his blessing. Since he was keeping a vow not to stay near (?) women, he fled into the mountains, going from place to place until he reached Thul-gyi Brag-sngon. He tried to keep his presence there a secret, but soon he was joined by others, no doubt including, even if the *Rgyal-blon-ma* does not say so, his disciple Mar-pa who requested from him the *Path of Ultimate Profundity*. This work and another entitled *Lhan-cig-skyes-pa Don-gyi Stod-pa* were composed at Brag-sngon.⁷ The disciple Mar-pa is mentioned a little later in the *Rgyal-blon-ma* (p. 288.1), where it says, "The Sgom-pa Mar-pa instituted the teachings at Te'u-skyog."

From this we may at least conclude that the *Path of Ultimate Profundity*, while it is one of his earlier compositions (and it seems his first compositions date from shortly after 1150), follows the Mahāmudrā realization and teaching authorizations which occurred after his meeting with Sgom-tshul. Perhaps most significant for our understanding of the text, however, is the knowledge that it was composed very soon after receiving teachings from 'Bhe'-ro on the *dohā* songs. It is certain that this 'Bhe-ro (also, Be-ro-ba) is identical to the Indian Mahāmudrā teacher Vairocanarakṣita alias Vairocana-vajra. Both the *Red Annals* and the *Blue Annals* support this identification.⁸ This very widely travelled and broadly learned Indian master had spent some time in China where he was especially

famed as an alchemist (this being the reason his name is sometimes prefaced by *dngul chu*, “quicksilver”) and he was also an expert in the *dohā* songs of the *mahāsiddhas*. It is in the tradition of these Indian Buddhist songs of non-dual realization that our text might best be located, and it may prove interesting to examine Zhang Rin-poche’s reliance on the *dohā* songs from both literary and doctrinal perspectives in a future study.

Path of Ultimate Profundity: The Great Seal Instructions of Zhang

Chapter One: On the View

Prostrations to the Venerable Lamas.

Paying reverence to the hosts of realized teachers
who have made to reach their aims all the lassos of empowerment,⁴
the most excellent among the compassionate activities
of all Buddhas without exception in all time,

I, with flawless joy, set down just a peripheral indication
of the Mind of all Sugatas transmitted by the yoga masters from mind to mind,
the highly refined nutritive essence of all supreme Vehicles of the Tantra Basket.

Although I have no strong and fully cultivated altruism, [51]
at the urging of my disciple who with reverent
intelligence follows the Sacred Dharma,
I, Brtson-'grus-grags-pa, felt that
its benefits would not stop until the end of becoming.

This is—

The Mother that gave life to all the Victors and their Sons.
What those fortunate ones with prior cultivation will experience.
The spiritual safety-box for those with venerable lineages.

The nutritive essence of the Vehicles with all their scriptures, reasonings and instructions.

The Dharma Body, the ultimate core of Buddha's uncompromised presentations.

The Realm of luminosity immaculate in its substantiality.

If the Victors of all time come or do not come, fine either way.

If the hosts of Saints are realized or not realized, fine either way.

[52]

If the Sages have expressed it or not expressed it, fine either way.

If the Masters have disentangled their meanings in commentaries or not, fine either way.

This utterly integrated and luminous Dharma Body

has remained naturally arrived at from beginningless time without waxings or wanings.

Within pure space the universe has formed and disintegrated,

and countless are the aeons that have been destroyed,

incinerated by fire, blown apart by wind,

while space itself remains unharmed, unaltered, with neither waxings nor wanings.

The ever-shining light of the sun may be totally eclipsed by clouds,

enveloping us in darkness. And when the clouds clear up

it becomes light again. Thus it appears to wax and wane.

But it is impossible for the sun itself to wax and wane.

This unaltering Dharma Body that remains in this way

is not some other thing apart from one's very mind.

It is to the very mind that the various things in saṃsāra and nirvāṇa appear. [53]

It is because one's very mind is troubled by lack of realization,

errors and misdirection, that the sufferings

of the animate and inanimate in saṃsāra appear.

It is to one's very mind that the definitive realization

of all the Total Knowledges beyond suffering

appears as Great Bliss.

Hence, since without exceptions these are radiations from one's very mind itself,

when one recognizes one's very mind as Dharma Proper

one will know the Dharma Proper of all sentient beings.

Knowing that, one knows all dharmas, nirvāṇa and the rest.

Knowing entirely all dharmas, one will know the one thing beyond all the three

realms,

and through this one will know all.

If one fells the roots, the leaves and branches will also be felled.

Hence it is your very mind alone that will decide the issue.⁵⁰
 The real condition of one's very mind, the seed of everything,
 has never differentiated from the Mind of all Victors and their Sons,
 is identical to the unarticulated Dharma Body.
 Not being inert matter, one's very awareness shines in due course.

It has not achieved thinghood, is void of color, shape and measure.⁵¹ [54]
 It is not a non-thing, it shows itself variously under differing conditions.
 Void through its substantiality, it will not turn into something eternal.
 Its substantiality intrinsically clear, it will not turn into something annihilated.
 It does not form a "self" since, when examined, it has no essence.
 It is not a non-self; it is an integral Great Selfhood.⁵²
 It does not form ends; it grasps at nothing at all.
 It does not form a middle; it is divorced from all perspectives.⁵³
 Similes do not symbolize it; there is no symbolizable thing to recognize.
 It is not impossible to make similes; it is like space.
 It is not found in words; utterances do not explain it.
 It is not free of words; it is the root of all utterances.
 Existence, nonexistence, truth, falsity,
 empty, not empty, quieted, disquieted,
 fissured or unfissured integrity,
 ponderable, imponderable,
 comfortable, afflicted, having or not having objectives,
 non-dual, not non-dual, beyond or not beyond thought,
 true or untrue, achieved or unachieved,
 pure or impure, naturally arrived at or not...
 Uttering clumps of words like these does not touch on it.
 Clumps of words, however acute and profound, [55]
 have been pronounced in many accounts,
 but are incapable of touching the real condition of mind.

However scholarly and intellectual the analyses
 over many aeons of pondering and analyzing,
 the real nature is not an object for science,⁵⁴
 and so they cannot realize the real condition of mind.

As an analogy, the planets and stars that shine in the ocean
 one may sift with the most finely-meshed cloth strainer
 but since it is not a question of real stars and planets,
 it is not possible to catch a single one.

As far as verbal expression is possible,

to that extent, however fine the names, it is not the real condition.
 As far as it withstands mental investigation,
 to that extent, however profound the understanding, it is not the real condition.
 In as far as the investigator and investigated are considered two,
 realization of the non-dual real condition is impossible.

In sum, all this reification is the root of all attachments.
 This root of all attachment keeps the vicious circle going.
 The idea of thinking it is Voidness, thinking it is without signs, [56]
 thinking it is without wish,
 thinking it is unrecognized, thinking it is utterly pure,
 thinking it is unarticulated, thinking it is not goal-oriented,
 thinking it has no nature, thinking it free of fissures in its integrity,
 thinking it is not a venue for speech and thought,
 thinking it is unmade and naturally arrived at
 and the like... All these conceptions no matter how profound and cynical (“empty”)
 are pretensions that have not broken free from signs.
 Pursuing these as conceptual problems with sign-attachment, they fall short of the
 mark.

While falling short of the mark does not mean an end to development,
 following something that has not entered deep within will give rise to dis-ease.
 Those contemplators who have mastered mind-made philosophies
 will be invaded by the chronic disease of partiality.

Know it as an unequalled parallel production.
 “Compromising presentations are simply exaggerations,
 while this is the real condition uncompromisingly presented.”
 Such statements are not to be seen, even among those of the Sage.⁵⁵

Do not mull over these expressions of mine.
 Understand that they are like the finger that points out the moon.
 Knowing this, the clumps of conventional words⁵⁶ [57]
 will not get in the way, will not veil understanding with verbal faults.
 So, without giving up words and investigations,
 take pride in the meaning and do not get attached.

This “own mind as Dharma Body” of which we speak
 embraces emotional problems, interfering thoughts,
 perceptual mechanisms, elements, perceptual filters, etc.
 It embraces all creatures in space, earth, stone, jungles, vegetation —
 all the vital and non-vital universe.

It embraces totally the ocean of Hearers, Self-Buddhas,
Bodhisattvas and Sugatas.

In sum, all subjective and objective
things without exception are embraced in their entirety.
But this embracing has no duality of embracer and embraced.
They are the miraculous projections of one Great Selfhood.
Although the ocean embraces all the planets and stars
that appear in the ocean, they cannot be divided into two.

Being just water, all the rolling waves
are embraced by water. So how can the waves be separated out?
A moving *fata morgana* in the clear sky
is totally embraced by the sky and cannot be separated out.

[58]

The ornaments made from gold, while various,
are embraced by gold with no way to divide their substance.
Figures of the six types of beings made from brown sugar
are embraced by pure brown sugar and cannot be divided out.
The sky is not other than the rainbow.
The rainbow is not other than the sky.
Rainbow is sky. Sky is rainbow.
They cannot be classed, distinguished or severed.

In like manner, mind and the myriad things are inseparable.
Mind is not divisible from the Void.
Void and Great Bliss are an inseparable sameness.
To the same extent, becoming and nirvāṇa are inseparable.
This sort of Mind Proper is the Great Seal.
A void nature has no recognizable features.
While the awareness of sign-hood is a miracle that shows up everywhere,
the inseparable substance of signs is the united Adamantine Entity;⁵⁷
the font of unlimited creative talents Precious Mind;
the Space Safety-box Mind from which no one can steal —
inexhaustible, gaining and losing nothing;
the clear crystal ball Stainless Mind;
the self-aware and self-illuminating Butterlamp Mind;
the luminous by nature Bodhi-heart Mind;
and, with nothing to disturb its flow, the Stream-like Mind;
with no recognizable features, the Atmosphere-like Mind;
Total Knowledge that knows no in- or outside, the Passing-right-through Mind;
a mind that appears in various reflections according to predispositions,
as in a clean bronze basin filled with water,

[59]

or like the polished surface of an untarnished mirror.

Chapter Two: On Delineating Saṃsāra and Nirvāna

One's very mind, in its ab-original condition as already set forth, has been subjected to the reifications of self and ownership concepts. Thereupon, misdirected attachments increased the hosts of troubling emotions and interfering thoughts.

These accumulated karmic force and, as karmic result borne on the tidal waves of saṃsāra's endless waters, the inexhaustible sufferings such as birth and death pound without ceasing, tossing and turning.

[60]

The various propensities to wrongly see the various phenomena of the six classes of beings cram up the mind and increase interfering thoughts. Through various counterproductive life-styles, various intolerable and inextricable sufferings are experienced one after the other without cease.

These experiences themselves promote a subsequent mental dullness. Fainting from its dizziness, anger and pride, desire and miserliness and the like disturb the mind again and again. My, who would place their trust in this vicious circle?⁵⁸

If one came to realize the ab-original nature of one's very mind, the pitch darkness of wrong understandings would be illuminated. If one is disentangled from attachment to the troubling emotions of the self concept, then one will certainly be freed from all karma and affliction; the ever-present Dharma Body will become evident, and the force of past aspirations will effortlessly bring aid to others.

Blissful in its Cause, blissful in its Path and blissful in its Result, the interdependent causations of nirvāṇa are sheer delight. The sufferings of Cause, Path and Result, the sufferings of saṃsāra's three realms are entirely decimated.

[61]

Those who flee the quagmire of saṃsāra will certainly arrive at the dry ground of nirvāṇa. Those who delight in nirvāṇic dharmas

will first enter into the Dharma
and, as soon as they do,
their faith will turn their minds in the direction of virtue.

Even if their appearance is bad, everyone will find them lovely.
(No reason to mention here the good-looking who enter the Dharma!)
Although they gave up fame, their fame will be proclaimed by all.
Although they have given up honor, everyone will honor them.
Although they have humbled themselves, everyone will carry them to high
positions.

Though they suffer from their efforts, they will live out their lives in happiness.
Though they became poor, they will make use of riches
and food and clothes will come to them, incidentally, without trying to get them.
Though they fled alone, they will acquire a group of followers.
Though unexorcised, the misguiding and hindering spirits will flee. [62]
Though uninvoked, the deities and Dharma Protectors will gather around.

One may see in public life how those who make a living
mainly through lying, cheating and trickery
have some fragmentary virtuous practices such as learning, etc.,
and do not let them go to waste
but use what good qualities they have to get rich.
To their pride and equivalent afflictive emotions
they add a little learning and become "big men."
If even their fragmentary refractions of virtue
truly result in all these fragmentary good qualities,
then how much more so with those who practice the pure Holy Dharma.

If there are such good qualities as soon as one enters the Dharma,
how much more the good qualities when one works hard at the practice?
They have so much freedom to live without pretensions
in the empty valleys and ownerless mountains.
Happiness among people without kindness is remarkably scarce.
How much more pleasant to keep the company of the deer who do not repeat
criticism.

The clothes of pure discipline are warm and beautiful.
Desireless satisfaction is wealth that is not lost.
When wearing the hard and thick armor of patience, [63]
powerful galloping diligence makes an excellent horse.
From here on the precious Lama is an excellent refuge.
Experiencing the essentials of the Path of Method is the happiest emotion.
Bliss, clarity and the absence of troubling thoughts is the sweetest contemplation.

The pure, void reflexive Awareness is the clearest of clear lights.
 That that which has no basis for appearance does nevertheless appear is most hilarious.
 When whatever dawns remains unmoved from the Realm, it is the most comforting thought.⁵⁹
 Being quenched with the nectar of meditative experience is the greatest satiation.
 When the uncompromised integrity dawns within, it is the purest of minds.
 Knowing how thought is is the most decisive of events.
 Owning the treasury of Awareness is the best kind of wealth.
 When all that is seen and heard is employed as Dharma Body, it is the greatest happiness.
 Controlling all that is seen and heard is the greatest power.
 Converting the delusionary armies of wrong thoughts is the greatest ferocity.
 Who empties the pit of the vicious circle is the strongest of persons.
 Who strongly strives for the welfare of beings is the greatest philanthropist.
 Who races over the plateau of Great Bliss is the fastest of couriers.

The host of good qualities that come from dedicating oneself to strivings such as these could be told for an aeon without finishing.

Speech is insufficient.

If such are the good qualities that come from dedicated striving, [64]

then what about the good qualities that come from attaining the signs of heat?

If these good qualities, the miraculous powers, clairvoyance, and so forth, were told for an aeon they would not be touched on.

If such are the good qualities that come from attaining the signs of heat,

then what about the good qualities that come from manifesting the Three Bodies?

If the good qualities of the Victor, imponderable and unsurpassable Total Knowledge, etc.,

were told, it would not be possible to finish.

Chapter Three: On Giving Up Business

No matter how skilled in words sharp and astute,
 until you have put them into practice and they dawn from within,
 it is impossible to realize how things are through intellectual investigation.
 Without your realizing how things are, the hidden propensities cannot be cleansed.
 Therefore, do not be fond of verbal and philological insights,
 but put the precepts of the Lama into practice.
 If they are turned into the parroting Pakshi's song,⁶⁰
 it is possible that you and others will fall into unperceived pits.
 Minds that put into practice the secret advice of the sages

will act without regard for life and limb.

Though it be a simple matter to die in a famine, or from cold and hunger, [65]
they will pass it all off as a dream.

It matters nothing if everyone criticizes them or spreads damaging rumors;
they will work in their hearts to achieve humility.

Unfinished worldly business is a cause of sin.

Questioning the cold and hunger is answered by fear of death.

These slight good qualities of beggar-monk Zhang
are due to putting life and limb on the line.⁶¹

One might renounce wealth down to the last needle and thread,
but when thoughts of making a living charge their taxes, there is no renunciation.

If they have not renounced the idea to avoid bad things
there will be no chance to give up worldly business.

If thoughts have not abandoned the world in its entirety,
one's deeds will be ineffective efforts and causes of sin.

If thoughts have not abandoned the world in its entirety,
then no matter what religious hardships one performs,
whatever courageous acts of giving, keeping disciplines,
offerings to the Lama, staying in solitude,
contemplative exertions, thinking of good meditative experiences,
great insight, sublime realization, and so forth,

will be ineffective efforts.

[66]

If this giving up the world in the thoughts is not understood,
then consider that if one disregards even the happiness of human or divine rebirths,
then of course it is needless to mention considerations
on the happinesses and dissatisfactions of the present life.

So long as the flow of anxious thoughts lasts

they cannot make arrangements for things to be done tomorrow or the day after.

Escape the trap and go to serve the Holy,

thoroughly master the treasury of their advice,

be impervious to the hosts of external and internal delusionary forces,

keep unhypocritical discipline and so on,

and, if capable of solitude, stay alone in a hermitage.

With an impartial altruistic mind free of entangling attachments

and with pure discipline that is not for outside show,

generate the idea to attain Awakening for the sake of animate beings.

Devote yourself purely to the practices without being too strict or too loose.

Do not take any thought for your own comfort or discomfort,

of cold, heat, hunger, thirst, or dangers to your life.

Do not waste yourself on issues of fame or possessions.

But, rather, put in practice the secret precepts as they are pronounced.⁶²

Chapter Four: Teaching the Ambiguities of Gradualist Persons
and Paths

The ways of living of sentient beings are imponderably many. [67]
 The variations in their sensory faculties are unimaginally many.
 The differences in their prior cultivation are intangible.
 The Vehicles of the Victor are endless.
 Still, to simplify, there are three types of persons.
 Through differences in their degrees of prior cultivation,
 there are gradualist, simultanealist⁶³ and leaping persons.
 The optimal Path for the gradualist
 is counterproductive teaching for the simultanealist.
 The optimal Path for the simultanealist
 is counterproductive teaching for the gradualist.
 Aconite is the optimal nourishment for the peacock.
 If others eat it, they will die.
 If the peacock renounces aconite, it will die.⁶⁴
 Water is the optimal habitation for fish,
 while humans and others suffocate in it and die.
 If a fish is thrown up on dry land, it will die.
 What is beneficial for feverish disorders
 will be harmful for cold disorders.
 What is beneficial for cold disorders
 will be very harmful for feverish disorders.

The distinct Vehicles were taught because even a single person
 may be benefitted by different Vehicles at different times.
 What benefits them when they are at a low level
 causes bondage when they are at a high level.
 What benefits them when they are at a high level [68]
 will cause their downfall when they are at a low level.
 As soon as a patient enters a certain level of feverish disease
 administering cooling concoctions is beneficial.
 But when the same patient is on the point of recovery
 it can be extremely harmful.
 Hence, when the opportune moments, the hours,
 and the levels of the faculties are known,
 they will not criticize each other for their Paths.

Gradualist persons first think
 about the difficulty of obtaining the ideal conditions for practice.
 They are saddened by fear of lower rebirth.
 After contemplating the ideal conditions and impermanence,
 they are swift to take the triple Refuge.⁶⁵

After that, they take the eight precepts of temporary ordination.
 Then they take the five permanent lay vows,
 and the vows of the Śramaṇera and the Bhikṣu, one after the other.

When they have divorced themselves from saṃsāric things,
 they set their sights on nirvāṇa,
 and, following the rules of a renunciate order,
 they study Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika philosophy.

Then they have an inferior Awakening, and in order to leave this behind,
 they contemplate returning the kindnesses of animate beings.
 Through cultivating love and compassion
 they generate the aspiration for ultimate Awakening.

Then, with preparatory, actual, and subsequent phases of practice, [69]
 they must practice the six Pāramitās,
 gather both of the accumulations,
 and, uniting Voidness and Compassion,
 cultivate peaceful abiding and transcending vision,
 cleansing fully their own minds.
 With altruism free of selfish desires,
 they constantly exert themselves toward helping others.
 A person who has trained in this manner will,
 in order to achieve the seven-limbed Body,⁶⁶
 enter the gates of Vajrayāna
 and study the four sets of tantras in order.
 When they have taken the Vase Empowerment
 into the adamant Supreme Yoga Tantra
 and keep the commitments purely,
 they will purify themselves in the stage of generation.

Then, through the Secret Empowerments
 they will master breath-control of the channels and airs,
 thereby doing the self-initiation.
 Then they will contemplate the Void Bliss in the Third Empowerment

and get accustomed to the ultimate in the Fourth Empowerment.

This explains some aspects of the gradualist person.

The types of these persons are more than may be told.

Their Vehicles need to climb up from below.

It is sufficient to study it in a general way.

There are even those who do not need to study it.

[70]

There are those who obtain Empowerments that were not conferred and many are those who, while having them conferred, do not obtain them.

There are also types who will obtain them if they have been conferred, and will not obtain them if they have not been conferred.

There are, as well, those who have always had Empowerment.⁶⁷

When one knows the types of vessels such as these,

one must do the practices that accord with one's vessel.

Chapter Five: On the Methods for Settling into Meditation

Simultanealist persons must

with life, limb and whatever possessions they have please the Lama who has the transmission.

The one who has Empowerment or blessings, well fortified with the thought of Enlightenment,

will, through deity yoga, contemplate from the very start the uncompromisingly presented Great Seal.

The Lama with the nutritive essence of realization will take the Total Knowledge that he has

and introduce it like a treasure in the palm of the hand.⁶⁸

While indeed there is no agent or object of meditation, they will not waver from the continuity of non-meditation.⁶⁹

The inner intentions behind the many introductions and cleansings only obscure the naturally arrived at Total Knowledge.

For meditating on the Great Seal

there is no need for precise directives on what to do.

The three phases—preparatory, actual, and subsequent—have no fixed order and no set number.⁷⁰

There is no need to count the number, time, hours and days.

They unfold at the time they come to mind.

There is no beginning, middle or end.

The mind itself is unproduced and continuous.

The muddy turbulence of its waves

become clear and unmuddy when left alone.

[71]

The mind itself, obscured and defiled by troubled thought,
 when left alone and unprocessed, clears into Dharma Body.
 Do not work on it; leave it alone.
 Do not rein in perceptions; let them range freely.
 Do not make plans for the future; be lackadaisical.
 Do not build up mental objects for meditation; let them pass (?).
 Without many things to do, stay at play.
 Do not look for a place to settle the mind,
 but leave it unsupported, as if dangling in the atmosphere.
 Do not think about past, present or future;
 but let perceptions rest in the mind.
 Whether troubled thoughts multiply or not, fine.
 Do not meditate for their sake; stay relaxed.
 In short, without meditating on anything at all,
 leave perceptions alone and let them go their way.
 No need to weary yourself for their sake.
 Die first rather than move from the continuity of Dharma Body.
 When perceptions are let loose [72]
 there is an experience of non-discursive clarity
 that remains as if in the center of pure space.
 This is the clear light Dharma Body.
 From the very continuity of leaving things like they are,
 some interfering thoughts pass through.
 But do not think that they are something other
 than luminous Dharma Body itself.⁷¹
 Just as out of a clear and calm ocean
 are tossed the roiling waves
 which are not something other than the clear ocean,
 likewise the basis for troubled thoughts is the mind.
 Mind is defined by its clarity and awareness.
 The nature of this clear awareness is the Void.
 The substance of this Void is Great Bliss.
 Since the darkness of this night is not permanent,
 the nature of mind is given the name "Clear Light."
 Since awareness and the Void are indivisible,
 it is given the name "Coupling."
 The selfhood of all dharmas
 is the substance of reflexively aware mind.
 This substance of reflexively aware mind
 is devoid of a body with identifiable characteristics.
 This unembodied body is the best of all bodies.
 Because its body is the unembodied Dharma Proper, [73]

it is given the name "Dharma Body."

Hence the interfering thoughts that project through

are Voidness projecting Voidness,

Dharma Body projecting Dharma Body,

Clear Light projecting Clear Light,

Great Bliss projecting Great Bliss,

Coupling projecting Coupling,⁷²

Dharma Realm projecting Dharma Realm,

Immaculacy projecting Immaculacy,

Vajrasattva projecting Vajrasattva,

Awakening projecting Awakening.

Persons in whom pure lineage precepts have not taken hold,

who are deluded, lacking the results of prior cultivation,

want to make two entities of the projected and unprojected,

of thought and non-thought, of mind and Dharma Body.

Thinking interfering thoughts at fault, they block them.

Desiring non-thought, they work for it.

Wanting to sweep away the waves,

they are tossed to and fro.

Non-thought that comes from blocking thought

is itself a delusion of troubled thoughts,

a great darkness veiling the Dharma Body.

Whoever is adverse to the flow of thought

is desiring to live without thought.

The enchantment ghost of desires for the future enters deep inside

depleting their ab-original treasury.

Contemplatives who block interfering thoughts

are like people who churn water hoping for butter.

They may meditate for aeons without glimpsing their goal.

Hence, blocking interfering thoughts is not called for.

If it is present, there is no need to move toward it.

Although projected, it is Dharma Body. Although present,

it has not moved away from Dharma Body.

When a reliable Lama has taken charge,

you will be disentangled whether you stay or move.

If a reliable Lama has not taken charge,

you will be entangled whether you stay or move.

Therefore allow the oral precepts to take hold

and these things will definitely turn out to be friends.

Without a lot of hurried investigations

let them relax and remain undisturbed.

Without following after the counterproductive thoughts,

let the perceptions range where they will. Let them go.

[74]

Do not focus on external objects.
 Do not focus, either, on your own mind.
 Objectivities are Void. Mind is Void.
 No need to make yourself worn out or intimidated.
 Identifying things with one's own thoughts
 is a way to plant the seeds of attachment to objectives.
 When conceited thoughts sprout up,
 the tree of saṃsāra will grow. [75]
 The luminosity of primordially pure Mind Proper
 must not be veiled by the darkness of contemplation.
 This will only disperse the fruits that need not be striven for.
 Do not stir up the muddiness of desire
 in the clear ocean of Mind Proper.
 This will only defile the jewel of Dharma Body.
 Do not smear the stains of meditative absorption
 on the untarnished mirror of Mind Proper.
 Then one will not notice the reflection of Total Knowledge.
 Do not pack this precious jewel of Mind Proper
 in the mud of conceptual signs.
 This will only prevent the required goal.
 In sum, remain without the existence concept.
 But remain also without the nonexistence concept.
 Existence concept is mind. Nonexistence concept is mind.
 These two concepts are trapped in their mutual regard.
 If there is no being whatsoever,
 there is no non-being whatsoever.
 Utterly abandon these concepts to their pure equivalency.
 Have no thought to settle down or not settle down into meditation.
 Have no thought to dismiss or not dismiss what prevents meditation.
 Have no thought to think or not think.
 No matter whether you walk, sit or get up,
 no matter whether you meditate, sleep or eat, [76]
 whether you tell or listen to gossip and so forth;
 what matters is to be seized by the ab-original mind.

Chapter Six: On Meditative Experiences

This, one's very mind as naturally arrived at Dharma Body,
 will certainly make its appearance in distinctive meditative experiences
 by settling into meditation without manipulation, allowing the thoughts to do as
 they will.

We hold that the manners of this appearance are three

according to whether one is a gradualist, a leaper, or simultanealist.
 The manner of appearance for the gradualist is as follows:
 At first it occurs as a mere sense of abiding.
 Then meditative experiences proper arise.
 Afterward, realization arises in abundance.
 At the time the initial sense of abiding occurs,
 interfering thoughts come up one after the other
 as if they were rolling down a steep mountainside.
 The thought occurs that perhaps this is no meditative experience at all,
 but this sensing of the amount of interfering thoughts that occur
 means that the perceptions have somewhat settled down.
 Before, when there was no settling down at all,
 the interfering thoughts erupted as they pleased
 and even the fact that they run on was not recognized.
 Then, like a slowly descending stream,
 the perceptions slow down and the troubled thoughts become few.
 Finally, like the depths of the ocean,
 the perception stabilizes and remains immobile.⁷³
 Then the meditative experiences occur. [77]
 One experiences a bliss, untroubled by thoughts and clear⁷⁴
 like the center of unbroken space.
 Like a butterlamp that does not flicker in the wind,
 one's own clarity, one's own awareness, is undistracted.
 Like a beautiful flower in a rainfall
 it stands out with a shining clear presence against the ground.
 Like the sun shining in a cloudless sky,
 nothing comes in the way of its smooth transparency.
 It is, like a bronze bowl full of water,
 transparent within and without.
 There will never be a word for such an experience.
 It dawns without reason like a dream.
 One sees like one sees a rainbow, though it is not a thing.
 It dawns like a moon in the water that cannot be grasped.
 Like desirable objects that appear in the sky,
 one enjoys it in the absence of anything to enjoy.⁷⁵
 Since all enjoyments are lost and go away,
 that which is not enjoyed is the supreme enjoyment.
 In that which is not enjoyed, there is nothing to lose.

Chapter Seven: On Non-dual Realization

When one has had such meditative experiences,

realizational Total Knowledge dawns in force.
 If realizational Total Knowledge has not dawned,
 no matter how fine the meditative experiences,
 it is like not going to the root when chopping a tree— [78]
 later on, psychological problems and sufferings will increase.
 Hence, the dawning of realization is most important.
 It does not dawn through wishing for it.
 It does not come through skill in analytical reasoning.
 It is not perceived through extensive study.
 It falls outside the purview of the philologist.⁷⁶
 Non-thought resulting from the stoppage of thought,
 no matter how thorough or intense,
 is a great veil over the production of Total Knowledge.
 This powerful realizational Total Knowledge does not at all dawn
 because of such things as wishing for it, adding to it,
 skill in analytical reasonings, or lack of such skill,
 learning whether narrow or extensive,
 insightfulness or deluded thoughts,
 meditative experiences whether good or bad,
 or strivings weak or strong.
 It will be experienced through one's own merit in combination
 with reliance on the interventional methods of the Lama.⁷⁷
 "Reliance on the interventional methods of the Lama" means
 the powerful experiences of blessings that dawn
 when serving a realized Lama.
 "One's own merit" means it occurs [79]
 to those who have the results of prior cultivation.
 Hence, this realizational Total Knowledge
 is something for those who have the necessary faith
 to remain on the Path of blessings.
 It dawns to those who have reverence.
 It is realized by those with prior cultivation.
 The friend of them all is assiduity.
 It is seen by those fortunate ones with superior faculties.
 In the thoughts of word-masters, there is not any room for it.
 This dawning of non-dual realization
 to such fortunate personages
 through the blessings of the Sacred Lama is
 the dawning of Dharma Body from the midst of realization,
 the dawning of non-duality from the midst of Mind Proper,
 the dawning of Total Knowledge from the midst of psychological complexes,
 the dawning of realization from the midst of meditative experiences.
 Awakening from dualistic confusion

is like a sleeping person waking up.
 Non-dual Total Knowledge instantly awakes.
 This is such a shock one thinks that
 an unprecedented understanding has entered in.
 The non-dual Total Knowledge is such a joy,
 while the practices of the past are such a shame.
 Now one breaches the boundary between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa
 which is called "realization and non-realization."
 In the past, prior to realization, by way of illustration: [80]
 A man while having a sleeping dream
 dreams he is floating aimlessly on the ocean of saṃsāra.
 He dreams he suffers in the hells and other realms.
 Fed up with this, he dreams he finds a Lama.
 He dreams he puts the Lama's precepts into practice.
 He dreams that meditative experiences occur.
 He dreams the clear light Dharma Body dawns.
 He dreams the darkness of troubled thoughts are cleared up.
 He dreams there is no difference between meditation and post-meditation.
 Then he dreams that realization dawns.
 He dreams he has impartial compassion
 for sentient beings who have no realization.
 He dreams that, after attaining the supreme Great Seal,
 he naturally achieves benefits for beings with Form Bodies.
 Immediately upon awakening from his sleep,
 there is no experiencing the suffering of saṃsāra.
 There is no getting fed up and finding a Lama.
 There is no putting his precepts into practice.
 There is no dawning of meditative experiences and Total Knowledge.
 There is no dawning of clear light Dharma Body.
 There is no clearing up the darkness of troubled thoughts.
 There is no abiding in non-thought.
 There is no dawning of Total Knowledge realization.
 There are neither sentient beings nor compassion for them.
 There is no Enlightenment and no obtaining it either.
 There are no animate beings and no benefiting them. [81]
 There is no truth, and no falsehood either.
 They are gone like a mere appearance in a dream.
 This dream-dreaming saṃsāra—
 Where did it come from? Where did it go?
 This nirvāṇa that does away with saṃsāra—
 Where did it come from? Where did it go?
 These and all other dream dharmas—
 Where did they come from? Where did they go?

By way of illustration, an illustrious king,
 without ever leaving his throne for a moment,
 saddles up a phantom steed,
 crosses many passes and valleys,
 and has all sorts of pleasant and unpleasant experiences.
 Though many months and years may have passed in this way,
 the king has not moved from his throne,
 and not even the morning has passed.
 Through realization such as this
 a moment of Great Insight grants mastery
 of the nature of all dharmas,
 but there is no pride of thinking, "I mastered it."
 The non-dual Total Knowledge has become evident,
 but there is no pride of thinking, "It is evident."
 One is freed from the three realms and lower Vehicles,
 but there is no pride of thinking, "I am freed."
 A moment of non-dual realization,
 and all visual and auditory phenomena are established as mind, [82]
 so that classificatory philosophy becomes clear (Vaibhāṣika).
 When they are established to be clear Mind Proper,
 all non-classificatory philosophy becomes clear (Sautrāntika).
 When the illusion-like reflexive awareness is perceived,
 then philosophy that claims things as illusory is completed (Vijñānavāda).
 When the illusory nature is perceived as Void,
 then the non-establishing philosophies are completed (Madhyamaka).⁷⁸
 When the Void arises as Bliss,
 the non-dual Coupling view is completed.
 When this Coupling is not something made in the mind,
 the Great Seal becomes clear,
 there being no idea to even think it has so become.
 Such a realizational Total Knowledge as this
 did not come from anywhere,
 does not go anywhere,
 and does not reside anywhere.
 Both that which is realizable and the Total Knowledge of realizables
 dissolve in the non-discursive Dharma Realm.
 There is no pride of concepts about the Realm.
 It remains in non-differentiation, like space.
 All speech and thought is cause for its dissolution.
 Toward immaculacy itself one requires an immaculate perspective.⁷⁹
 It may be that the children
 have grown tired of my playing.

If so, they should serve a venerable Lama.
 If not, they should place their perceptions at rest.
 These considerations were for gradualist persons.

[83]

The ways things occur to leaping persons
 are basically three: settlings, meditative experiences and realization.
 In the beginning, exceptional realization occurs,
 although this realization is unstable like waves.
 Then some of them have meditative experiences,
 while others have settlings. There is no rule.
 They gain facility in experiences both high and low.⁸⁰

Simultanealist persons,
 either as soon as they examine the mind
 or as soon as a Lama with the nutritive essence of realization
 teaches them the precepts,
 the meditative experiences, realization and settlings, all three,
 occur at once without taking time to meditate.
 Although their meditative experiences wax and wane,
 their realization remains firm and unchanging.
 Although the monkeys and apes race up and down,
 the tree remains without changing.
 Whether the rainbow dissolves or not,
 this brings no change in the realm of the sky.
 Whether the waves are calmed or not,
 this has no impact on the depths of the ocean.
 How will you isolate meditative experiences
 within the naturally arrived at Dharma Body of your very mind?
 It wipes out the afflictions of experience.
 However, if realization is not accompanied by meditative experiences,
 the beginner will be overcome
 like a butterlamp left out in a storm.
 But, for a contemplative who has achieved stability
 all experiences, good or bad, will be of help.
 Beginners should not be alarmed at this,
 but when a lamp is small,
 even the tiniest bit of moisture will harm it.
 When a great forest fire is raging
 all the storms there are will only help it.
 Contemplatives who have not achieved stability,⁸¹
 even when some shadowy realization has occurred,
 need to feed the torch of realization

[84]

with the dry wood of meditative experiences.
 Too much wet wood will put it out.
 No matter how lofty the realization,
 if they have not stabilized with settlings and meditative experiences,
 they will not attain mastery of their minds
 but instead will be caught up in inimical mental complexes.
 Just so, a well esteemed person,
 when captured by enemies and shackled in a dungeon,
 may well know the way to his own home,
 but has no power to go.
 Therefore, when one has not attained mastery of the mind
 through stable meditative experiences,⁸²
 one will lose the treasures of realization. [85]
 I do not have the mouth for a big piece of speech.
 Be wary, all you contemplatives:
 Mouths are at variance with experience.

Chapter Eight: On Action

The yoga practitioner of the Great Seal
 brings out the luster of meditative experience
 in the wish-granting jewel of realization
 and fulfils all needs and desires through the power of practice.
 As soon as the gradualist persons
 engage in the Path of Secret Mantra,
 they distance themselves from non-virtuous thoughts
 and expunge saṃsāric dharmas from their minds.
 When they have set their minds on Great Awakening,
 they generate the thought of benefitting beings
 with intentions free of selfish interests.
 Keeping always their pride of divine status,
 they do mantra repetitions, mandala offerings,
 tormā rites, worship offerings and the other seven limbs of offering.
 They do tormā rites for feeding the hungry ghosts
 and water offerings for feeding the water spirits.
 They perform services for the Lama if they have one,
 feasts and communion circles for monks,
 and give to beggars without holding back.
 They must do inner and outer fire offerings. [86]
 They construct *tsha tsha*,⁸³ chortens and images.
 They protect the lives of animals. They read scriptures.
 In short, they fill their time between practice sessions

with nothing but virtuous activities
 motivated by great compassion.
 They have no time for irreligious activities,
 let alone non-virtuous actions.
 They must purify all inner and outer obscurations
 and strive to accumulate merit
 in accordance with the virtuous dharmas of all levels of beings
 through conscientious and restrained conduct
 like that of a new bride
 or of an extremely observant monk.
 Concealing their good qualities, these increase in privacy.
 Those who belittle karma and karmic results
 will have contempt for conventional methods.
 Like a bird without wings, they will surely fall
 into the chasm of low rebirths.
 Hence, they must give up the most minor non-virtues
 and work for the most minor virtues.

Such virtuous preparation will give them
 a diligence that never rests,
 and after achieving some solidity,
 their practices divide into the external and internal.
 Their social practice accords with those of the people,
 while their inner practice, their meditative concentration, grows in isolation.
 When meditative experience of the inner practice has grown, [87]
 without being detected by beginners,
 they engage in actions that accord with that experience,
 doing that which advances their contemplative absorption and realization.
 They must make use of the half-ten deathless⁸⁴
 and also rely on the five strengths.⁸⁵
 Without denying the half-ten sensory qualities,⁸⁶
 they have given up attachment to them and take them as friends [on the Path].
 When the farmer's wheat shoots
 have been watered and manured, they grow.
 When the yogi's Total Knowledge sprouts
 make use of sensory qualities, they grow.
 Because they never separated from unproduced meditative experience,
 they use them with no attachment whatsoever.
 When this freedom of the six heaps to act on their own⁸⁷
 takes over with non-dual realization,
 they must lead life as they will
 without do's and don'ts.
 With meditative experience of non-dual realization,

there is no "wear this" and "don't wear that."
 Whether good or bad, they wear their clothes.
 There is no "eat this" and "don't eat that."
 Whether clean or dirty, they must eat it.
 This makes non-discursive Total Knowledge increase.
 There is no "say this" and "don't say that."
 They must speak as if they were sleep-talking.
 They must not make themselves conform to anything
 but relax and remain as they happen to be. [88]
 They must not be separated from the experience of Dharma Body.
 They must not be attached to anything.
 Whether their own acquaintances or others
 say good or bad things about them,
 they must not make trouble even for a moment,
 but remain impassive as a lifeless object.
 They must never ever do things that harm the mind.
 Just as deer flee from the presence of people,
 so must they constantly flee the presence of people.
 They must not make distinctions like "he is good" or
 "he is bad" towards others, with pride in their own goodness.
 Just as a swindler conceals his crimes
 they must always hide their own good qualities.
 They must not be puffed-up "big men"
 but always keep an inferior place.
 Though they have realized the absence of high and low,
 they must constantly worship the Lama and sky-goers.
 In short, they must give up all
 selfish interests, trickery and affectations.
 For as long as the meditative equipoise and subsequent experiences are two things,
 they must check if the perceptions in meditation are stable or unstable.
 If their perceptions in meditation are not stable,
 theirs is a fool's meditation that consists in wrapping their heads up and murmuring,
 misunderstanding what meditation is all about.
 They must work for physical and verbal virtues, [89]
 being motivated by love and compassion.
 If they have stability in meditative equipoise,
 it is still easy for physical and verbal virtuous actions to be broken off.
 Nevertheless they must apply themselves exclusively to meditative equipoise.
 This post-meditative experience of which we speak
 has nothing to do with sitting or standing.
 For the beginner, meditative equipoise means
 to stabilize the mind one-pointedly and unwaveringly



on an appropriate virtuous object of concentration.
 If they have done this, it is equipoise whether they walk or sit.
 If, not remaining in one-pointed concentration,
 the mental whirligigs⁸⁸ begin to run wild,
 even if they are seated on the meditation cushion, it is post-meditation.

The meditative equipoise of realizing their very minds
 is to be known through the levels of the Four Yogas.
 When the one-pointed yoga arises,
 they understand the nature of their very minds.
 Like the center of uninterrupted space,⁸⁹
 it is a void clarity, unobstructed, without middles or extremes.
 This remaining very sharp and distinct,
 it is the contemplative equipoise of the first yoga.
 The vacillating thoughts that pour out from it
 are, even if they are seated on the meditation cushion, the post-meditation.⁹⁰
 If the very sharp and distinct void clarity remains,
 then even if they are conversing, walking, or sitting,
 they remain in the continuum of meditative equipoise. [90]

When the yoga of the unfissured integral arises,⁹¹
 one realizes the substance of one's very mind.
 Awareness is an unfissured integral with no break in its flow.
 One's very mind remains as Dharma Body
 without production or prevention, without acceptance or rejection.
 This is the meditative equipoise of the second yoga.
 If they remain in this meditative equipoise,
 they remain in its continuity even when walking and talking.
 If signs of fissuring cause disturbance,
 then even if they are seated on the meditation cushion, it is post-meditation.

When the yoga of qualitative equivalence arises,⁹²
 one realizes the classificatory marks of one's very mind.
 One understands how, out of the unfissured integral Dharma Body of one's very
 mind,
 the manifold of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa arises.
 In all the various mental complexes, non-discursiveness,
 appearances, non-appearance, abidings, non-abiding,
 voidnesses, non-voidness, clarity, non-clarity,
 because of their qualitative equivalence as clear light Dharma Body,
 they see no phenomenon that is not Dharma Body.
 They see no signs that are not Clear Light.

The hour in which realization of such qualitative equivalence takes hold
is the meditative equipoise of the third yoga.

When the original mind takes hold, [91]
whether they jump, run or have conversations,
they remain in the continuity of this meditative equipoise.
When they separate from the original mind,
even if they are seated on the meditation cushion, it is post-meditation.

When the yoga of non-meditation arises,⁹³
the substance of awareness having no underpinnings,
the yogis have nothing to meditate with.
Without anyone to do the meditation, they are adrift.
It is said that in them are completed the Buddhas
who have the Three Bodies and the five Total Knowledges.⁹⁴
They perceive absolutely that it is just so.
This accomplishment of the Great Seal
thoroughly establishes that it is just so.
They have no haughty thought that they have attained
an accomplishment that was there all along.
Of recollection that has taken hold or not taken hold there is none.
Of mental activity or inactivity there is none.
Of qualitative equivalence or non-equivalence there is none.
In the self-preservation of non-dual perception
there are no gradations of meditative equipoise and post-meditation.
In the uninterrupted flow of void awareness
there is neither production nor cessation.

Like the garuḍa bird which has already completed
its special powers inside the shell, and so, when free of its shell, cuts through
the heights and depths of the sky,
the qualities of the Three Bodies are already completed in mind. [92]
Free of physical confinement, benefits for others dawn.⁹⁵
In this way, the occurrence of non-meditation
has no meditative equipoise or post-meditation stages.

No matter how lofty the realization,
for as long as one is in training,
meditative equipoise and post-meditation are two.
There is recollection that has or has not taken hold.
There is distraction and non-distraction.
But when it arises as nothing to be trained,

this is what we call non-meditation.⁹⁶

In it there is neither meditative equipoise nor post-meditation because one remains exclusively and constantly in meditative equipoise.

Walking, sitting and even lying down do not make any difference.

Sleeping or having dreams make no difference.

Holding conversations and even eating make no difference.

These activities are entirely embraced by the mind of ab-original realization.

They are all nothing besides meditative equipoise.

Jewels, whatever is needed or desired, are theirs to make use of.

The rays of the sun are theirs to make use of.

All are within the yogi's constant meditative equipoise.

We call this "non-duality realized."

Post-meditation in the time of single-pointed yoga

views these things as persistent materializations

that must be visualized as illusions which nevertheless appear.

Post-meditation in the time of the unfissured integral yoga

views these things sometimes as illusory appearances

and sometimes as only persistent materializations.

[93]

Either way they must be visualized as Dharma Body.

Post-meditation in the time of qualitative equivalence yoga

views these things as dawns as Dharma Body when recollection has taken hold.

When recollection has not taken hold, they view them as only fuzzy persistent materializations.

In the non-meditation yoga, meditative equipoise and post-meditation are simply Dharma Body.

I do not have the mouth for a great deal of talk.

I do not have the mouth for swallowing dry tsampa.⁹⁷

Do not wrap up your own head.

In the time of non-meditation,

it remains evident whether one sleeps or not.

If you want to analyze it, fine. If not, fine.

If recollection takes hold, fine. If not, fine.

It remains evident as Dharma Body, beyond self and others.

Through exerting themselves in impartial compassion

it dawns forcibly and without doubts.

Until such an occasion occurs,

those contemplatives who are fond of blanking out⁹⁸

are only fooling themselves.

Such fortunate contemplatives must,
 until they reach the level of non-meditation,
 serve the Lama and accumulate merit.
 If they have not been fooled by blanking out,
 the accumulation of merit will not mislead them.
 This is the heart talk of the realized ones.

[94]

The difference between the social and individual
 is lost on the Total Knowledges of Dharma Body.
 When free of dualistic attachments,
 nothing is lost on the eight worldly dharmas,⁹⁹
 so, although wandering in society,
 they are in seclusion.
 When, with dualistic attachments,
 they concern their minds with happiness and sorrow,
 even if they stay alone, they are socializing.
 Therefore isolation is fine and socializing is fine.
 What is most important is not to be attached to anything,
 and not to concern the mind with happiness and sorrow,
 without ever lacking in non-dual realization.
 Distinctions between individual and social,
 distinctions between meditative equipoise and post-meditation,
 were taught with the intention of guiding
 people who are beginners.
 In uncompromising presentations, there is no twoness
 of social and individual, of meditative equipoise and post-meditation.
 If one asks why, it is because the mind itself
 is parallel production of Dharma Body.
 Appearances are the light of Dharma Body's parallel productions
 like the flame and the light of the flame.
 Since in the substance of Dharma Body, awareness,
 there can be no waxing or waning in its constant flow,
 how can there be meditative equipoises and post-meditations?
 That a contemplative who has gained stability in this realization
 has no meditative equipoise and post-meditation, no one would dispute.
 For these reasons, one standard does not work for all persons.

[95]

If it is a question of which is most important, realization or meditative experience,
 then it is realization that is important, not meditative experience.¹⁰⁰
 No matter how fine the meditative experience,
 in the absence of realization there can be no liberation.
 No matter how lofty the realization,
 in the absence of compassion, it is the Path of Hearers.

One may have tasted the contemplative absorptions
of the four dhyānas¹⁰¹ and so forth,
but with the great fault of non-realization
the experiences will fade and finally
one will fall into lower rebirths and the like,
and then there will be unfading sufferings. Consider this carefully.
All experiences are compounded things.
All compounded things are impermanent, will fall apart.

Therefore, without being attached to meditative experiences,
realize the non-dual Total Knowledge.
Complete nirvāṇa¹⁰² is under the purview
of realization exclusively.

Mind-made non-duality is realized through extensive learning. [96]

But this non-duality of which we speak dawns from within.

It is due to the Lama's blessings alone.

Reverence for the Lama with faith
grows realizational Total Knowledge from within.

What does it have to do with philosophical analyzers?

Even I would make the claim that it can be perceived in words.¹⁰³

But when realization has dawned in the mind,

it needs to be considered whether bad circumstances have an effect on it or not.

On your right stands somebody chopping with an axe
saying all sorts of cruel things.

On your left stands another making offerings of sandalwood incense,
respectfully proclaiming all kinds of nice things.

In times of undergoing such good and bad things,

if they can, without getting distressed on their account,

accept them without pleasure or displeasure,

then even if they do crazy things in public, it is fine.

However, if they do not have facility in the powers

to transform bad faith and so forth,

then performing the secret activities in groups

will be the ruin of themselves and others.

When the different kinds of clairvoyances

of knowing whether they will help others, etc., arise

and they have gained facility in these powers,

there is no difference between their public and private actions. [97]

The Revered Mi-la-ras-pa said something about this:

“The ten virtues are not actions to be taken up.

The ten sins are not actions to be given up.

Stay as you are, relaxed, without affectations.”

Did not Revered Lo-ras¹⁰⁴ also say,
 "The Three Precious are not
 something high and awe-inspiring to be worshipped.
 They are complete in the awareness continuum.
 You will never find a place to take Refuge."

To me, the beggar-monk Zhang,
 and to you my realized Vajra Brother[s] as well,
 these thoughts of the Revered Ones,
 are as clear as a flame in a glass.
 If I tell them and they have trouble understanding,
 it is because these things dawn on their own
 to those who, with faith, please the Lama
 and whose hearts the Lama's blessings pierce.
 The "actions that conquer the universe" and
 the "activities of Great Meditative Equipoise"
 are not mentioned here for fear of verbosity.
 One must look in the oceanic Supreme Tantras.¹⁰⁵
 I do not have the mouth to tell much here.

Without babbling nonsense,
 they will engage in the activities at the right time,
 will make efforts without being too tight or too loose. [98]
 Their views will be free of partial perspectives.
 Their conduct will be free of affectation.
 Their compassion will be impartial.
 Their meditation will be undistracted.
 Good qualities will emerge without ending.
 They will achieve benefits for beings without end.

Even though non-dual realization has not taken hold,
 some talk nonsense about forceful methods for fixing people,
 "Enemies and friends, gold and dirt clods, are the same,"
 they say without bothering to even fix their style into a high style.
 If this brought liberation, then little children would be liberated.

If, when non-dual realization has not taken hold,
 they think that the absence of give and take brings liberation,
 we would have to say that every lunatic would be liberated.

If, when non-dual realization has not taken hold,

the nonexistence of clean and dirty brought liberation,
then dogs and pigs would be liberated.

If, when non-dual realization has not taken hold,
skill in action led to liberation,
then brides would also be liberated.

If, when non-dual realization has not taken hold,
being loose and spontaneous led to liberation,
then every fool would be liberated.

When non-dual realization has taken hold,
then whether their behavior is coarse or refined,
either way they will be liberated.
When the non-dual realization has not taken hold,
actions, whether coarse or refined, are entangling.

[99]

When filled with impartial compassion,
whatever way they act is the Supreme Path.
When impartial compassion has not taken hold,
no matter how they act, it is an inferior path.

Chapter Nine: On Commitments

If you would like to know how to keep the commitments,
at the time of being a beginner
the vows of appropriate disengagement¹⁰⁶ and the other vows,
as well as the Word of the Sugatas and Lamas, must not be broken.

At the time of meditating on [the subtle body's] channels and winds,
they must avoid everything that might detract from bliss and heat.

When the non-discursive experiences dawn,
they must avoid anything that prevents or endangers contemplative absorption.¹⁰⁷

After they have seen the substance of their very minds,
they must avoid everything that is injurious to the mind.

When the non-dual realization dawns,
they must give up all ambitions.

In all of this their very minds must be the witnesses.
 After they have realized the meaning of not transcending the Realm, [100]
 there is no vow to keep. This is the supreme commitment,
 what we call the White Self-sufficient Medicine.¹⁰⁸

Chapter Ten: On the Goal

The view is not counterproductive.
 The precepts are not given to closed or unsuitable vessels.
 The contemplation is unerring—not too tight or too loose.
 The practice is free of attachment, without faults.
 In keeping commitments, there is no need to fear the blame of deities.
 The goal inevitably brings about everything needed and desired.

As illustration, it is like a medicinal plant.
 If the interdependent connections between the field,
 the seed, the season, irrigation and fertilizer are not closed off, [it sprouts].
 If even the sprout can cure sickness, then all of the other parts as well—
 the stalk, branches, leaves, flowers and fruits —
 have potencies which are individually suited
 to curing particular sicknesses.

If incorrect interdependent conditions
 result in suffering,
 there is no need to mention that correct and favorable
 interdependent conditions
 bring good and favorable results.

If even dualistically conceived compounded things may,
 through their interdependent connections, bring about
 good and bad results,
 there is no need to mention that a timeless and unbounded disregard for dualities
 may bring unbounded Total Knowledge. [101]

If virtuous acts, even those done out of materialistic motives,
 may gain one the happiness of paradises,
 there is no need to mention that unbounded
 virtuous acts done without partiality
 may lead to Complete Enlightenment.

If bliss, clarity and absence of troubling thoughts,
 when accompanied by attachment, may bring about

divine status in the three realms,
 there is no need to mention that the same free of attachments
 may bring the Three Bodies of a Victor.

If the experience of Voidness in the absence of method and insight
 may gain one the bliss of the Arhat and Pratyekabuddha,
 there is no need to mention that Voidness and Compassion in indivisible union
 may result in unplaceable¹⁰⁹ bliss.

When the beginning yoga practitioners
 are not closed off from the meditative stabilizations
 and post-meditations of the generation stage,
 the best among them materialize the unified Complete Assets Body¹¹⁰
 in this very lifetime,
 or in the intermediate state,
 or, if not then, in a later life they will at least obtain
 the perfect conditions of divine embodiment,
 and thereby materialize the unified Complete Assets Body.
 Still others will attain it after going through
 seven rebirths as humans.

When the intermediate grade practitioner has the experiences
 that go with the Completion Stage with signs,¹¹¹ [102]
 in an instant, their accumulated sins are
 washed away, and they are blessed by the Skygoers.
 When these experiences made of bliss, clarity and absence of troubling thoughts
 have become a habit, realization will surely dawn,
 leading without doubt to the materialization of the Three Bodies,
 in some cases in the intermediate state.

Extremely diligent yoga practitioners may,
 when the profound instructions have taken hold,
 even in the absence of non-dual realization, through their efforts to
 inject their consciousness into the [bodily] habitation of another person
 or to transfer consciousness to a higher state,¹¹²
 accomplish the True Transference.
 Or, if this is not possible, it will happen in the intermediate state.
 The best of these materialize the Clear Light.
 The intermediate ones achieve the unified Illusory Body.
 The least of them at least acquire the power to choose their own rebirth
 in the habitation¹¹³ of a favorable womb,
 their later attainment of the Three Bodies assured.

When the yoga practitioners of the Great Seal
loosen and relax their perceptions,
they have an experience of clarity and absence of troubling thoughts
which arises like the center of undifferentiated space.

At the same time as this experience arises,
incalculable sins and obscurations are utterly voided and,
although they may not yet be assured of it,
they have encountered the Dharma Body.

[103]

When the exceptional realization of non-dual paralleled production occurs,
in that very moment, no matter how much sin
they have accumulated from beginningless time,
it is all utterly overcome.

The Great Seal overcomes all in one fell swoop
just like lighting a lamp in a dark room.

The confused people err when they assess it in terms of the stages of the Path,
but still, in order to please those confused people who believe they apply even here,
it will be assessed in terms of these stages of the philosophical Vehicle.¹¹⁴

The dawning of the just mentioned exceptional realization
is the Extremely Joyful Level equivalent to the Stage of Seeing.
Becoming accustomed to this realization of substantial levelness is the Stage of
Cultivation.

When there is no more cultivation, it is the Ultimate Stage.¹¹⁵

Suffering is not immediately done away with
upon the non-dual realization,
but no one would assert that it is not the Stage of Seeing
just because the good qualities and abilities have not been developed.
The sun is not able immediately to melt the ice
as soon as it rises in the morning.

But, even if the soil and rocks have not become warmed,
no one would assert that it is not the sun.¹¹⁶

[104]

The Sage taught all these differentiations between
signs of warmth and stages of the Path
in elastic expressions in order to accommodate
those potential aspirants who are gradualists,
though confused people get attached to minor aspects of these teachings.
The higher and lower grades of aspirants are beyond reckoning.
The sermons of the Buddha are beyond reckoning.
Even if some are in conflict with one's own preferred scriptures,
one must not criticise and reject them,
but rather make an aspiration prayer to one day understand them.¹¹⁷

The all-at-once Great Seal
 is like the fruit of the jack tree.¹¹⁸
 Cause and result are simultaneous
 and the signs are disentangled on their own ground.

Monkeys climb up the tree from below and pick the fruit,
 while hawks pick it only by alighting on the top of the tree.
 The hawks do not even see the lower branches
 but, needless to say, they do pick the fruit.

Likewise needless to say the simultanealist person does,
 even without seeing the stages and signs of warmth,
 see the Dharma Body.
 These persons are distinguished by their prior cultivation and abilities.

In a moment of ab-original realization,
 they attain dominion over the realm beyond suffering.
 The pure and unattainable Mind Proper
 has always been perceived to be the goal,
 but is not realized through such perceptions;
 it is beyond conceptualizations.
 It discloses itself without any meditative stabilization or post-meditation,
 without production or cessation.
 It discloses itself as Great Vajra Holder
 of the naturally arrived at Five Bodies.¹¹⁹

[105]

Such a state of Total Knowledge is said to be attained
 by force of cleansing the two defilements
 and completing the two accumulations.
 In this case also the two accumulations are completed
 and the two defilements are forcibly cleansed.
 In a moment of non-dual realization
 the great accumulation of merit is completed
 because all the Lamas and Buddhas are pleased.
 The seeds of the defilements of troubling emotions
 such as stinginess are permanently expunged.
 While one is becoming accustomed to this realization
 there may remain some minor perceptual defilements,
 but at the moment of no-more-to-meditate-on,¹²⁰
 the great accumulation of Total Knowledge is complete.
 The seeds of the defilements due to knowables
 pertaining to subject, verbal action and object

are permanently expunged.

This is what is called Complete Awakening.

It is the accomplishment of the Great Seal.

My goodness, such an amazing and miraculous teaching!

Complete Buddhahood in a single moment!

[106]

Chapter Eleven: On Sameness

In the preceding parts we have set forth the true character of the view.

This and all the dharmas of meditation, action,
commitments and Goal

are magical productions of one's very mind.

In the continuity of Mind Proper's clear reflexive awareness,
the clearness in itself signifies the Void.

Like space, it has no division into parts,
no sides, and no recognition of center and extreme.

Since such a Mind Proper
has no duality of viewer and viewed,

there is no view; neither is there any realization.

Since meditator and meditative object are non-dual,
there is no meditation; meditative experiences are precluded.

Since the one who gets accustomed and that to which one becomes accustomed
are not two, there is neither habituation nor non-habituation.

Since distractions and the one who is distracted are not two,
there is no absence of distraction, nor is there any distraction.

The activities and the actor are not two;
so there is neither activity nor actor.

Attainment and attainer are not two;
so there is neither striver nor attainment.

Like the center of empty space,
there is no duality of cause and goal;

so there is no generating and no maturation.

On the Mind Proper, void from beginningless time,
there is no staining and no cleansing.

Since dynamic¹²¹ Awareness and Voidness are not two,
there is neither Total Knowledge nor not knowing.

[107]

The contemplative who perceives the sameness
of all views, meditations, actions,
commitments and Goal

in the substance of clear light Mind Proper
 has no attachment to viewer or viewed.
 This non-attachment is the King of Views.
 They have no attachment to meditation or meditator.
 This non-attachment is the King of Contemplations.
 They have no attachment to activity or actor.
 This non-attachment is the King of Action.
 They have no attachment to attainment or attainer.
 This non-attachment is the King of Goals.

Chapter Twelve: On the White Self-sufficient Medicinal

In a moment of realizing one's very mind
 all the good qualities of white virtue
 are, without striving for them, completed at once.¹²²
 In the atmosphere-like Mind Proper
 the Three Bodies are already naturally arrived at.
 By this the Buddha Precious is completed. [108]
 Mind Proper is an unfissured integrity free of desire.
 By this the Holy Dharma Precious is completed.
 Its nature unproduced and not turning back,
 the different kinds of interfering thoughts arise as friends.
 In this the Fellowship Precious is completed.
 If, in this way, the Three Precious
 are completed in the awareness of one's very mind,
 one need not go elsewhere for Refuge.
 By this the uncompromisingly presented Refuges are completed.
 In this unfissured integral Mind Proper
 there is no basis for self-serving desires.
 Therefore in this the Bodhisattva aspiration is completed.
 By one's understanding everything as error,
 impartial compassion arises.
 By one's naturally arriving at benefit for others,
 the Bodhisattva engagement is completed.
 Since the atmosphere-like Mind Proper
 is free of the delusions of grasping attachment,
 the Perfection of giving is completed.
 Because it is free of the stains of defining marks,
 the Perfection of discipline is completed.
 Because it is not intimidated by Voidness
 and has overcome the seeds of anger,
 the Perfection of steadfast patience is completed. [109]

Because the Void Awareness is an unbroken stream,
 the Perfection of diligence is completed.
 Because its one-pointed concentration is already naturally arrived at,
 the Perfection of meditation is completed.
 Because the defining marks of counterproductive perspectives have disentangled
 themselves,
 the Perfection of insight is completed.¹²³
 Since whatever phenomenon that occurs arises as friend,
 through this Great Method, the Great Accumulation of Merit is completed.
 Through realizing the meaning of non-duality
 the Great Accumulation of Total Knowledge is completed.
 Since in the atmosphere-like Mind Proper
 bodily defilements do not remain,
 the Great Empowerment of the Vase is completed.
 Since verbal defilements are already cleansed,
 the Great Empowerment of the Secret is completed.
 Since there is no place for mental defilements,
 the Insight Total Knowledge [Empowerment] is completed.
 Since there is no place for defilements that equally pertain [to all three],
 the Supreme Empowerment of the Fourth is completed.
 In whatever colors and emblems that appear
 through unobstructed understanding of implicitly radiant reflexive awareness,
 in them the ends of the Generation Stage are completed.
 Through its unidentifiable clear radiance
 the Completion Stage is completed. [110]
 The exceptional realization of the non-duality
 of one's very mind and Clear Light
 is the Path of Seeing.
 The uninterrupted continuation of this is the Path of Cultivation.
 This, free of pushing and striving, is the Ultimate Path.
 Total lack of obstruction is the best sign of warmth.
 In this the Paths, Stages and signs of warmth are completed.
 Not at all an existent is the Dharma Body.
 Whatever appears is Manifestation Body.
 Since whatever appears has its Assets in Dharma Body,
 the Goal of the Three Bodies is thereby completed.
 Atmosphere-like reflexive awareness,
 being free of partial perspectives, is the completion of the view.
 Being free of attachment to objectives, it is the completion of meditation.
 Being free of do's and don'ts, it is the completion of conduct.
 Being free of breakage, it is the completion of commitment.
 Being naturally arrived at, it is the completion of the Goal.
 In the Void clear light Mind Proper

there are no classifications of prior and subsequent,
of past, present and future.

For so long as the self concept persists, however,
we have view, meditation, conduct, goal and commitment;
we have karma and the ripening of karma, and
to renounce sin and accumulate merit is important.

Chapter Thirteen: On Aspirations

I, the mendicant monk of Zhang,
was urged by my disciple Chos-kyi-blo-gros.¹²⁴ [111]
So, in order to guide a few aspirants
to the never-reified and never-deconstructed¹²⁵
actual condition of Mind Proper,
I have reified it and put it down in letters.
But since it in any case appears under the right conditions
and because I have written with love, there is nothing wrong with this.

May the good virtue of this and all other virtues
combine into one and lead to the realization of non-dual Dharma Body
for the sake of beings extending out to the ends of space.
Through unattached and unfocussed compassion
may the form bodies fill the ends of space,
bring benefit to beings without trying to do so,
and display themselves to those who are capable of benefitting.
Beginning with this moment and extending into all time,
may beings attain bodies that are perfectly endowed.¹²⁶
Then, with insight and compassion together with faith,
may they do nothing but virtuous practices with great strength.
May all those who are suitable vessels for the supreme Vajra Vehicle
obtain the best sort of Lama, one who possesses both the oral precepts
and the compassionate blessings of their own realization,
and serve the Lama always. [112]
May all of us see the good qualities of the Lama
and never see even a single fault,
but see the Lama always as identical to Vajraholder.¹²⁷
May our faith and veneration flow without ceasing.
Through the cultivation of unfocussed Great Compassion
which has none of bad motivations' pollution
may we ourselves come to have every good quality
of all Lamas and Buddhas.

May we obtain the utmost through
 immaculately impartial views'untouched
 by the four extremes of positivism and nihilism,¹²⁸
 through radiant bliss unattached and not mind-made,
 and through the practices for realizing sameness.¹²⁹
 May we always strive to attain and protect
 the commitments to avoid the censure of the skygoers,
 commitments free of the stains of mental complexes,
 and not put them on to fool other people.

While keeping in permanent retreat,
 may fears, regrets and impediments never arise.
 May we attain the miraculous powers of good qualities—
 meditative experiences, realization, signs of warmth and the rest.
 May whatever course of conduct we pursue
 be beautiful in the eyes of all
 the Lamas, Vajra Brothers and other sentient beings.
 May our triune body, speech and mind;
 our place, our clothes, our name and clan;
 our seeing, hearing, remembering, touching, etc.,
 and whatever else is desired be complete.
 May our minds be untroubled, stable, happy,
 undistracted, learned and realized.
 May our minds be immaculately disciplined
 free from such faults as hopes and desires,
 renouncing without attachments all things.

[113]

By attaining stability in the generation and completion stages,
 may we reach the ultimate coupling with Clear Light
 and through our naturally arrived at blessings
 fulfill the hopes of all beings.
 May we, with the limitless miraculous powers
 that come from unfocussed compassion,
 pacify all the violent powers
 such as deities, nāgas, yakṣas, and māras.
 When the opportunity to thereby help others arises,
 may we happily, fully and ungrudgingly give up
 our heads, limbs, flesh, blood, life-force and breath.
 May we without pride help others with whatever they need
 and whatever sort of wealth they desire, whether food, drink, wealth, horses or
 whatnot.

May our powers and splendor come to the rescue
 doing whatever is needed to counter the opponents and possessing spirits,¹³⁰[114]
 doing whatever is needed to counter such sufferings as sickness and famine.
 Beginning from the present moment and extending to all time,
 may we do only what benefits others.
 May we never give birth to troubled thoughts
 no matter what wrongs others have done,
 but do what is needed to help them.
 May we do what is needed to help every being
 without being touched by such non-virtuous stains
 as condescension, pride, envy,
 self-interest, social distance or partisanship.
 Not being pleased by the praises of others
 or displeased by their criticisms,
 but through undriven equanimity and compassion
 may we remain untouched by the taints of the passions.

May the compassion of Avalokiteśvara,
 the insight of Mañjuśrīghoṣa,
 and the powers of Vajrapāṇi
 all be completed in us.
 May the learning of Nāgārjunagarbha,
 the realization of Saraha
 and the magical powers of Virūpa
 all be attained by us.

May we know the use of all mantras and tantras. [115]
 May we achieve without hardship all the combined ritual objectives.
 May we be made masters of unlimited oral instructions.
 May we please all the skygoers.
 May our stable and definitive realization
 of the meaning of sameness—sameness in which
 the dharmas do not come from anywhere,
 do not go anywhere,
 and do not abide anywhere—benefit others.
 May all of our unprejudiced learnings—
 in the arts, treatises, poetry and so forth—
 be for the benefit of others and free of hidden motivations
 so that they will not be subject to contention.
 May we not be deprived of the range of helpful conditions
 such as family, talents, leisure,
 insight into the correct meanings or words,
 the use of magical powers, and so forth.¹³¹

Religious people in these bad times of the present
 have little of the inner discipline that comes from study.
 Even those who are learned in clumps of words
 have not realized their significances.
 In the future, their proud contentions will increase.
 The revered Lamas of the accomplishment transmission¹³²
 pursued meanings and became accomplished.
 Permanently renouncing such things as pride,
 understanding meanings was the only skill
 in scriptural authority and reasonings they required.
 Tilopa did not preach even a single word to Nāropa,¹³³
 but nevertheless all the scriptural authority, reasonings,
 and oral instructions were completed in Nāropa's heart.

[116]

Therefore, this man's chatter—
 all the faults of expression, the contradictory accounts,
 and the statements of little profit—
 are nonsense off the top of my head.
 I have written this with the idea
 that it would work for my own followers.
 Of those that will not be benefitted
 there will be no end until the end of becoming.
 If there is a single word that conflicts with
 scriptural authority, reasoning or oral precepts,
 my head will split open.
 These realizations of mendicant monk Zhang
 were written down at the urging of his disciple Mar-pa
 at Brag-sngon of Sbar-bu Thul.¹³⁴
 If it is later shown to people, it will be a sin.

I have told as much as I have myself realized,
 as well as using scriptures, treatises
 and the thoughts of the Lamas.

* * *

E-ma-ho.

These deep and naturally arrived at oral instructions
 were completed in the heart before being put in words,
 and handed down to disciples who were worthy vessels for them.

I bow to the precious Lama Zhang.

May the lovely spring shoots of discipline grow
 on the golden ground of faith
 in the universe of attained merit.

[117]

Entwining about the tree of Bodhisattva compassion,
 the mantra flowers of the knowledge-holders appear
 and the fruit of inherently radiant awareness ripens
 creating a wealth of naked visions of Clear Light.

Reverent prostrations to Zhang Rin-po-che

who has attained mastery over unarticulated space.

May this Profound Oral Instructions on the Path of Great Seal
 bring great benefit to limitless beings.¹³⁵

Notes

Dedicated to my long-time teacher Thubten J. Norbu, formerly a professor of Tibetan Studies at Indiana University. I benefitted considerably from reading a not-yet published article by Dr. David Jackson on the “self-sufficient white simple” (*dkar po chig thub*), and have incorporated several changes which he suggested through correspondence; my thanks to him and to others who read and commented on drafts of the translation. Readers of the following work will notice several references to a text edition. Unfortunately, space limitations made it impossible to reproduce this Tibetan-script edition here. The Arabic page numbers, from the reprint edition of the *Rtsib-ri Par-ma*, vol. 4, pp. 49-117 (I have also made use of a microfilm version of the woodblock print from the Nepal National Archives [called text N], which contains 32 variant readings, evidently due to retracing, rather than to alterations of the woodblocks), have been supplied in the translation to facilitate cross-references with that text. I have based my translation almost entirely on the *Rtsib-ri Par-ma* version, which is certainly preferable to the edition in Kong-sprul, ed., *Gdams-ngag Mdzod*, vol. 5, pp. 744-777 (called text G), which does nevertheless have many interesting variants, some of them noted below. Those who require the text edition should correspond with me directly. Manuscript preparation was made possible during my tenure as fellow at The Harry S. Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and I am grateful for their support.

1. His dates were 1122/3 to 1193. I have dealt with his life, based on his autobiography and other sources, in a paper delivered at the Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs, November 1990, at Bloomington, Indiana, entitled, "Zhang Rin-po-che and the Emergence of Sectarian Polity in Twelfth Century Tibet." I do not intend to deal in detail with his biography or his political involvements in the present work. Since the *Path of Ultimate Profundity* was composed prior to his more controversial activities, they are not especially relevant here. Many of the particulars of his biography may be known from David Jackson's article, "Sa-skya Paṇḍita the *Polemicist*: Ancient Debates and Modern Interpretations" (see the bibliography; henceforth referred to as "Jackson"), pp. 102-104. This very important contribution should by all means be consulted by readers of the present work.

2. For a very good translation of one of his biographies, see Tsang Nyön Heruka, *Life of Marpa*. See also Martin, "Review."

3. One of his biographies has been translated; see Guenther, *Life and Teaching of Nāropa*, but note that this sixteenth-century biography does not, as the introduction to that work states, belong to the late twelfth century. There are indeed late twelfth-century biographies of Nāropa available, including one by Zhang Rin-po-che (Zhang, *Writings*, pp. 312.4-326.7).

4. For his life, see Tatz, "Life of the Siddha-Philosopher Maitrīgupta."

5. We recommend the following two books on the subject of Mahāmudrā: Wang-ch'ug-dor-je (=Karma-pa IX Dbang-phyug-rdo-rje), *Mahāmudrā: Eliminating the Darkness of Ignorance* (Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamsala 1981), tr. by Alexander Berzin; and Takpo Tashi Namgyal (=Dwags-po Bkra-shis-nam-rgyal), *Mahāmudrā: The Quintessence of Mind and Meditation* (Shambhala, Boston 1986), tr. by Lobsang P. Lhalungpa. Note also Guenther, "Mahamudra," a brief article on the subject. Perhaps the most accessible and sympathetic statement on Mahāmudrā is still the 1952 assessment found in Guenther, *Yuganaddha*, pp. 128-138.

6. The best translation of a biography of Mi-la-ras-pa is that by Lhalungpa, *Life of Milarepa*, which should by all rights take the place of the still-popular rendering by Kazi Dawa Samdup and W.Y. Evans-Wentz. As I have indicated elsewhere, there are a great number of biographies of Mi-la-ras-pa, many of them much earlier than this work of Gtsang-smyon He-ru-ka, and the serious historical study of these biographies still has a long way to go (see Martin, "Early Education").

7. One of Dwags-po Lha-rje's works has long been available in English translation: Guenther (tr.), *Jewel Ornament*. This work very clearly betrays his reliance on the Bka'-gdams-pa *Bstan-rim* literature, which emphasizes the stages of the path based on the *Abhisamayālamkāra* (it is certainly not the case, as Tucci, *Minor Buddhist Texts*, vol. 2, p. 102, stated, that Dwags-po Lha-rje "ignores" the *Abhisamayālamkāra*; he in fact cites it at least a dozen times). On *Bstan-rim*, see Doboorn Rinpoche, "Bstan-rim Chen-mo'i Ngo-sprod," and an article devoted to

the subject by David Jackson forthcoming in José Cabezón and Roger Jackson (eds.) *Tibetan Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion).

8. See Jackson for a masterful overview of these controversies. Both Zhang Rin-po-che and Hwa-shang Mo-ho-yen have been faulted by some Tibetan critics for advocating the effectiveness of “not thinking” (*mi rtog pa*) in the absence of prior cultivation. Even a superficial reading of the following translated text will demonstrate that Zhang Rin-po-che’s position on this matter is quite the contrary, emphasizing both the futility of “blinking out” and the importance of prior cultivation. One statement in the *Bka’-thang Sde Lnga* seems to clearly ascribe “not thinking” advocacy to Mo-ho-yen:

The meditation master (*bsam gtan gyi mkhan po*) Mo-ho-yen (Ma-hā-yān) said, “Settle the unthinkable Dharma Proper in non-thought (*mi rtog pa*). Even those without prior cultivation are able to use this [method].” (Based on text in Tucci, *Minor Buddhist Texts*, vol. 2, p. 71, line 12; compare Tucci’s translation on p. 86.)

This would seem to settle the issue with regard to Mo-ho-yen. However, as we become aware that this part of the *Bka’-thang Sde Lnga* is merely a verse paraphrase of passages from the *Bsam-gtan Mig Sgron* (See Karmay, *Great Perfection*, p. 90 ff.), then we will have to consider the passage as it appears in the *Bsam-gtan Mig Sgron* as more authentic. This passage reads simply,

“Settle, without thinking, into unthinkable Dharma Proper.” (*chos nyid bsam du med la mi rtog par bzhag go*; see *Bsam-gtan Mig Sgron*, p. 58, line 6).

Not only is the statement on the non-necessity of prior cultivation absent here, we find that its necessity is clearly affirmed in Mo-ho-yen’s words found in the first of the two alternative versions (the more authentic one) of the *Bsam-yas* debate found in the more detailed version of the *Sba Bzhed* (Sba Gsal-s nang, *Sba Bzhed*, p. 68): “For those who have cultivated their minds in the past, for those who have sharp faculties, virtue and sins are equally obscuring just as clouds whether white or black equally obscure the sun.”

9. Citation of M. Broido in Jackson, p. 59. I use the word “philological” in an older and larger sense of the term that is still not entirely obsolete, meaning the field of literary study, language study, etymology, and history. Of course, “tracing traditions” might mean drawing delegitimizing etymologies for motives of personal interest or partisanship.

10. The Tibetan title is *Phyag-rgya-chen-po Lam Zab Mthar-thug Zhang-gi Man-ngag* (or, in text G: *Skye-med Zhang Rin-po-ches Mdzad-pa’i Phyag-rgya-chen-po’i Lam Mchog Mthar-thug*). It seems that the original title may have been *Lam Mchog Mthar-thug*, “Ultimate Supreme Path,” since this is how the work is

called in another text by Zhang Rin-po-che himself (Zhang, *Writings*, p. 600.4), although it is called *Lam Mthar-thugs*, “Ultimate Path,” in the *Rgyal-blon-ma* biography (Zhang, *Writings*, p. 284.7). My objective in this introduction is, by the way, primarily to “introduce,” if only partially, the content of the translation, and not to close around the translation until it is forced to articulate its concerns within the bounds of my own author-ity (what is often called “placing the text in *its* context” as a cover for the practical intention, which is to place the text in *our* contexts). On the contrary, my concern is to ascertain how my own professed approach might be objectified through a careful and responsive reading of the text. There is not much use in a critical scholarship (which could be, translated, “a hostile stance for protecting or furthering the cultural hegemony of the academy”) that forgets how to listen patiently, incapable of self-criticism. I see my main task as one of making the translation say in English what the text conveys in Tibetan, and problematic as the task surely is, it is upon this basis that the results will be meaningfully criticised. Those who are looking for textual deconstructions are capable of carrying them out on their own, and they might be able to take some pointers from Zhang Rin-po-che himself, assuming they are able to tone down their text-hostility temporarily. If the goal of deconstruction is to directly confront the truth of things free of the mediation of socio-cultural “texts,” then a common purpose might very well be negotiated.

11. See the bibliography. Both Zhang’s work and the *Phag-gru Zhus-lan* represent “oral advice” or “instructions” (*man ngag*) given by meditation teachers to their students. Sgam-po-pa’s words in the *Phag-gru Zhus-lan* were intended for the benefit of one particular student, Phag-mo-gru-pa (even if Phag-mo-gru-pa himself might have put the advice in writing for the sake of posterity; it should also be noted that in one of the sections the questioner was not Phag-mo-gru-pa, but another student of Sgam-po-pa named Chos-g.yung), while the work of Zhang Rin-po-che was intended for the broader, if still quite restricted, group of his own spiritual descendents. Both are “secret,” i.e., not intended to be read by the majority of us. While *man ngag* were intended for the use of individual students at a particular point in their development (and this has considerable consequences for the way we must read them), Zhang Rin-po-che’s work is, unlike the *Phag-gru Zhus-lan*, written up into a versified treatise-like form, presumably supplying *in general*, the sorts of things he might have said to his various students at various times.

12. *phyag rgya chen po la yang lam la gnas pa’i dus na / lam phyag rgya chen po zer ba yin / ’khor ’das gnyis su med pa’i ye shes chen por rtogs nas blang dor dang bral ba’i dus / mthar thug gi phyag rgya chen po bya ba yin / de dus gsum gyi sangs rgyas kyi dgongs pa phyin ci ma log pa de yin pas / sangs rgyas logs nas btsal du mi myed de /*. My use of capital letters for certain nouns and phrases is, by the way, meant to signal their greater weight within the context, and is not necessarily intended as personification or hypostasization. The fashionable rejection of capitals in some Buddhological circles (intended as a polemical

prophylactic against theistic interpretation?) is, ironically, an admission of an expressive potential which would be relinquished at a loss, in my opinion. Buddhists rejected deities, but then went on to employ them. Buddhists rejected essentialism, and then went on to employ essentialist terms.

13. According to Kong-sprul, *Shes-bya Kun Khyab*, vol. 3, p. 385, realization is beyond the sphere of the three types of insight (*shes rab*): 1) understandings (*go yul*) that come from learning, 2) experiences (*myong ba*) that come from pondering (*bsam pa*), and 3) experiences (*nyams snang*) that come from meditating. This standpoint on the ultimate inadequacies of learning, pondering and meditative experiences is supported in the following citation from Sgam-po-pa. (Sa-skya Pañḍi-ta however disagrees with the distinction, arguing that *go* and *rtogs* are [or should be] synonyms, since employed by Tibetan translators to render identical words in Indian languages; see Sa-skya Pañḍi-ta, *Sdom Gsum Rang Mchan*, p. 122.1).

14. *pyir chos la byed lugs gnyis yin te / mtshan nyid shes par byed pa dang / rtogs pa thob par byed pa gnyis yin / thos bsam byed pa yang thabs yin / nyon mongs pa'i grogs su ma song ba zhig dgos / shes pa' i 'bras bu 'chad pa yin te / gting nas phan par mi 'dug gsungs / thos bsam gyi shes rab kyis lam ma sbyangs kyang bla ma dam pa gcig dang phrad nas / de'i gdams ngag sgrub pa yin / rgyud la rtogs pa bskyed par nus pa yin / sgrub pa byed pa'i dus su / 'jig rten pa'i rtog pa spong ba dag a cang ches te / bstan bcos kyi tha snyad thams cad kyang brjed dgos pa yin / thos pa rgya che ba yang tshig la mo ste / don la brtul ba yin / yon tan skyon du 'gyur ba yin/.*

15. See the context, in the translation below, to know what the “these” refers to.

16. These words are located at the beginning of p. [55], in the translation given below. Note that the page numbers in square brackets, intended to facilitate cross-referencing the translation with the text, are the Arabic page numbers supplied in the reprint of the *Rtsib-ri Spar-ma*.

17. See the following translation, the end of p. [56] and beginning of p. [57].

18. In fact, he has quite a few good words to say about learning.

19. See the end of p. [115] in the translation below.

20. P. [56], below.

21. This triad of *bde*, *gsal*, and *mi rtog pa* occurs four times in Zhang Rin-po-che's work. In Kong-sprul, *Shes-bya Kun-khyab*, vol. 3, p. 385, they are listed as the three contributing factors (*rkyen*) of meditative experience (*nyams*; and note on the following page a further discussion by the Eighth Karma-pa). See Guenther, *Royal Song*, p. 35: “As a warning against becoming fettered by the experience of sticness in clinging to this felt unit of cognition, by ‘transcendence’ the radiance and nothingness, devoid of the operations of the intellect, are indicated as Mahāmudrā.” One may detect in this translation, based on a passage from Karma-'phrin-las-pa (1456-1539), the presence of the same terms being discussed here.

I prefer the translation “clarity” (for *gsal ba*) to Guenther’s “radiance,” since it refers to a direct or unmediated quality of experience (see McDermott, “Yogic Direct Awareness,” p. 150ff.).

22. The Tibetan text for the passage paraphrased here (*Phag-gru Zhus-lan*, p. 27.1 ff.) is as follows: *nyams ni blo'i cha las ma 'das pa yin te / dper na sprin gseb kyi nyi ma dang 'dra / bde gsal mi rtog pa gsum / res mtho res dma' la gnas pa 'ong ba yin bas / 'di la ma zhen par bskyangs pas blo'i dri ma dwangs nas rtogs pa gdod 'char gsung /*. A fuller rendering of this passage has been made by H. Guenther, “*nyams* does not pass beyond the working of the intellect; it is like the sun concealed behind the clouds. Sometimes the triad of radiance (*gsal-ba*), bliss (*bde-ba*), and nondiscursiveness (*mi-rtog-pa*) is of high intensity; sometimes it is of a low one and is coming and going. *Rtogs-pa* is an understanding when the impurity of intellection has been removed because then this understanding is preserved in its integrity without there being any desire connected with it.” (See Guenther, *Royal Song*, p. 117, note 42.) Sgam-po-pa later (p. 37.5) compares the onset of these meditative experiences to a man drunk on beer, a maiden having an orgasm, and even a strong hatred, in the sense that one is completely absorbed in the experience, unable to speak or think.

23. See p. [95], in the translation to follow.

24. See the end of p. [95], below.

25. On scriptural and commentarial sources for the Four Yogas, see Kong-sprul, *Shes-bya Kun Khyab*, vol. 3, pp. 385-6; and Takpo Tashi Namgyal, *Mahāmudrā*, pp. 354-8. Zhang Rin-po-che composed several brief works on the subject of the Four Yogas for his disciple Khams-pa Mgon-ston, contained in Zhang, *Writings*, pp. 499.5-531.1.

26. Jackson, p. 26 ff. For another early use of the phrase *cig shes kun grol*, see the song in Karma-pa I, *Selected Writings*, vol. 1, p. 315.6 (note also the scriptural citations stating that one single teaching, in this case compassion, is sufficient on pp. 295-296). A later use of the phrase is found in Karma-'phrin-las-pa, *Songs of Esoteric Practice*, p. 138.4.

27. It certainly does make everything simpler if everyone is required to follow the same disciplines and undergo the same stages in their development. The student is then completely predictable, and the teacher is absolved from the difficult responsibility of reading the student's mind. See *Phag-gru Zhus-lan*, p. 30, where Sgam-po-pa says that, without clairvoyance, one cannot assess the minds of others to know which teachings will be appropriate for them.

28. See Zhang, *Writings*, p. 509.7, where it is directly stated that the distinctions among the Four Yogas were designed with “gradualists” (*rimis kyiis pa*) in mind.

29. These words, attributed to Phag-mo-gru-pa, appear in 'Jig-rten-mgon-po, *Works*, vol. 4, p. 408.

30. *Phag-gru Zhus-lan*, p. 51: *sems nyid dang chos nyid gcig gam tha dad zhus pas / sems nyid dang chos nyid gnyis gcig yin te / sems kyi 'od chos nyid yin*

pas / sems nyid rtogs pas chos nyid sgrog rang brdal du 'gro ste / ... sems kyi ngo bo 'ba' zhig bsgoms pas chog gsung /. See also Zhang Rin-po-che's text, "a moment of Great Insight grants mastery of the nature of all dharmas" (p. [81], below).

31. These passages are found on pp. 33-34, 37-40, 41-45.

32. This initial depression of thinking one is a failure at meditation is also mentioned in *Phag-gru Zhus-lan*, p. 41.4.

33. *Phag-gru Zhus-lan*, p. 33.2-6: *de la brtson 'grus bskyed nas bsgoms pas dang por sems 'phro ba tsug 'dug kyang / rtog pa'i bag chags je chung du 'gro ba yin / rtog pa chung du song bas sems nyid je dangs je dangs la 'gro ba yin / des sgribs thams cad 'dzad pa yin / dus de tsam na bya ba thams cad btad la bla ma dang / yi dam la sogs pa la gsol ba 'debs pa dang / mos gus drag po byed pa dang / bya ba btang nas bsgom pa la brtson pa skom pa chu 'thung ba' 'dra ba zhig dgos pa yin no // dus de tsam na nga (pa?) bsgom mi 'ong snyam pa kun la yang / nan tan byas pas 'ong gin 'dug /*

34. *Phag-gru Zhus-lan*, p. 39.4-6: *rang gi rig pa 'di mnam rtog gis ma bskyod par cir yang ma bcos gang la yang mi sems par gzahg pa ste / ting nge 'dzin gyi rgyal po yin pas nges pa'i shes pa skye dgos / kha cig de ltar skyes kyang / yin par ma shes pas / sgom de dmigs gtad can nam / nyams myong can nam / yang na mam rtog 'gags snang ba nub nas ro bzhin du 'dod 'jug ste / de min gsung /*

35. *Phag-gru Zhus-lan*, p. 34.1-4: *shes pa rten med pa gang la yang mi red (rnyed?) par / spros pa thams cad dang bral ba rig pa'i ngo bo shun pa bshus pa 'dra ba'am / ngo bo la snying po bcug pa lta bu zhig 'ong ste / de tsam na ma rnyed pa rnyed ngo ma shes pa shes / dbul po'i lag tu gter rnyed pa lta bur zag pa med pa'i dga' ba rgyas pa'ong ste / sems spro sing nge dga' sing nge ba zhig yong ba yin no // de la nan tan bskyed nas bsgoms pas 'khrul pa'i rtog pa mams sangs / rtsol sgrub kyi nyams len dang bral nas / rig pa spros med du song bas spros bral gyi mal 'byor zhes bya ste /*

36. *Phag-gru Zhus-lan*, p. 40.1-2: *'khor 'das kyi chos thams cad rang sems kyi mam 'phrul yin te / sems nyid skye ba med pa rtsad chod nas 'khor 'das kyi chos thams cad rang sar dag pa'i nges pa'i shes pa lhangs kyis skye dgos /*

37. This clarification is supplied in *Phag-gru Zhus-lan*, p. 43.3.

38. "Unclassifiable" translates *lung du ma bstan*. This might be compared to the usage of *lung du mi ston* in the statements of Hwa-shang Mo-ho-yen (Gómez, "The Direct and the Gradual," p. 112, p. 160 note 40).

39. *Phag-gru Zhus-lan*, p. 34.4-5: *snang ba la blo btang yang mi 'gro bar snang ba dgag sgrub dang bral ba ste / snang ba thams cad lung ma bstan du 'gro ba yin no // de la bsgoms pas yun ring du gnas pas du ma ro gcig gi mal 'byor zhes bya ba nang nas 'char te /*

40. *Phag-gru Zhus-lan*, p. 40.3-40.5: *sems kyi snang ba rig pa'i rtsal mam tog sna tshogs su 'gyus kyang gnyen po gzhan rten mi dgos par sems kyi mam rtog nyid la bden pa dang rtog par ma grub bar ngo bo nyid kyis ma skyes te /*

41. The yoga leading up to Non-meditation is called the Ceaseless Flow Yoga (*chu bo rgyun gyi mal 'byor*), a favored term in the songs of Mi-la-ras-pa.

42. This is only a partial translation of the following passage from *Phag-gru Zhus-lan*, pp. 34.5-36.6: *mam rtog gi snang ba la rig pas sgro 'dogs gcod mi dgos par / thams cad sems su thag chod pa zhig 'ong ba yin no // de tsam na rang rkya thub pa zhig 'ong ba yin / de yang blo yar ldan du 'ong ste / snang ba 'di sems kyi mam 'phrul yin par shes pa zhig skye ste / bsgom mi dgos par snang ba 'di res sgyu mar mthong / res stong par mthong / res rtog pa 'phro btsug byed / rig pa dang stong pa ngo sprad pa 'i gnad kas ngo bo la blo lhan gyis bzhag tsa na / rtog pa thams cad gar song cha med la 'gro ba yin / de la yun ring du sing nge gnas pas bsgom du med pa 'i mal 'byor zhes bya ba skye ste / snang ba thams cad chos nyid 'od gsal du 'char ro // 'dod chags la sogs pa nyon mongs pa dang mam rtog skyes pa dang / chos nyid 'od gsal du lhag gis shar ba dang gnyis dus gcig tu lhangs lhangs shar ba yin no // de ci 'i phyir zhe na / snang ba dang rtog pa chos nyid rang yin pa 'i phyir ro // rig pa dang chos sku rdo rus phrad pa 'i gnad kas / bsgom mi dgos par chos skur lhangs lhangs 'char ro // de tsam na mnyam gzhag dang rjes thob med pa yin te / bsgoms kyang 'ong la ma bsgom kyang 'ong ba 'o // 'gro 'chag nyal 'dug ci byas kyang chos nyid 'od gsal rgyun chad med par gnas so // de 'i dus rig stong gi ngo bo la nges pa 'i shes pas nang du bltas pa 'i dus su / ngo bo 'i don de la gang gis kyang ma phog pa yin / pha rol tu phyin pa 'i smra bsam brjod med kyis kyang ma pong (phog) / dbu ma pa 'i ngo bo nyid kyis skye ma myong byas pas kyang ma phog / ma hã mu dras blo las 'das pa yin byas pas kyang ma phog / sems tsam pa 'i lta ba rang rig rang gsal yin byas pas kyang ma phog // nga 'i tshig gis brjod pa de mams kyis yang e mi phog / de nges pa 'i shes pa kha phyir bltas pa 'i dus su tshig tsam du mtshon na de mams gang dang yang mi 'gal ba yin / de ci 'i phyir zhe na / rig pa dang snang ba bkag pas mi khegs / de nyid kyi don stong pa nyid de bsgrubs pas mi 'grub / de tsam na tshig dang tha snyad rtog pa 'i spyod yul min / phyogs re nas mtshon na gang dang yang mthun / de 'i dus su mnyam gzhag chen po 'i mal 'byor zhes kyang bya 'o //*

43. *Phag-gru Zhus-lan*, pp. 40.5-41.1: *sems kyi mam rtog dang bsgoms pa 'i nyams dang rtogs pa 'i shes rab mams ngo bo mthong ba 'i mthus dbyings su yal te / tha mal gyi shes pa ma bcos pa chos nyid du ngos 'dzin pa nges pa 'i shes pa lhangs kyis skye dgos /*

44. Another source suggests that the word for "glue" (*rtsi*) should be interpreted as "honey" (*sbrang rtsi*), with the simile being that one should not be like the bee that gets stuck in its own honey (see the words of Tilopa to Nãropa contained in *Dpa'-bo, Mkhas-pa 'i Dga'-ston*, vol. 1, p. 770). The text for the list of "crucial things" reads as follows (*Phag-gru Zhus-lan*, p. 45.2-5): *lar dang po rtse gcig gi mal 'byor gyi dus su / 'du 'dzi spangs shing brtson 'grus bskyed pa gal che / de nas spros bral gyi mal 'byor gyi dus su glang snyoms la ma lus par shes pa ngar dang bcas pa gal che / du ma ro gcig gi mal 'byor gyi dus su go yul spyi 'i mam pa dang ma 'dres par nang du nyams su myong ba gal che / bsgom du med pa 'i mal 'byor gyi dus su nyams myong gi rtsi la ma 'byar ba gal che gsung ngo // nyams*

la ma zhen pa zhig dgos gsung /.

45. Kong-sprul, *Shes-bya Kun Khyab*, vol. 3, p. 379. It may not be immediately transparent that a “seal” requires both something to make, as well as something to receive, the impress. These two things, metaphors for the knowing faculties and the universe of knowables, are thoroughly united in the Great Seal. It is a universal embrace that “has no duality of embracer and embraced” (p. [57]).

46. This passage, from the *Sher-grub-ma* autobiography (dating from 1166), is contained in Zhang, *Writings*, p. 13.

47. We also have a collection of songs composed at Brag-sngon (which was in the high part of a valley above Bsam-yas Monastery), contained in Zhang, *Writings*, pp. 601-627. Two of these songs supply the Bird year date, which must be 1165.

48. See Roerich, tr., *Blue Annals*, pp. 844-846; *Tshal-pa, Deb-ther Dmar-po*, p. 127. See also *Dpa'-bo, Mkhas-pa'i Dga'-ston*, vol. I, p. 513, where he is called Bai-ro-tsa-na-badzra (i.e., Vairocanavajra). Unfortunately, the biography of Vairocanavajra composed by Zhang Rin-po-che is not available in Zhang, *Writings*. This biography was entitled *Bai-ro'i Rnam-thar Bla-ma Rnal-'byor-pa*. Still, we are able to glean some information about him from other writings by Zhang Rin-po-che. In one place (Zhang, *Writings*, p. 429.4), he is called a yogic practitioner of the royal clan Tsa-he (?) in the city So-na-tha-pu-ri (modern Sonetpur?) in the Indian region of South Ko-sa-la, or present day western Orissa. Zhang Rin-po-che also names the authors of the Dohās that Vairocanavajra taught him — those of Saraha, *Ka-kha*, Tilopa, Kṛṣṇācārya, and Virūpa (Bhir-ba-ba). Vairocanavajra (Bla-ma Bai-ro) was also a teacher of Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa (Karma-pa I, *Selected Writings*, p. 71.1). It is perhaps important to point out that Vairocanavajra was a holder of Indian lineages stemming from Tilopa and Nāropa, making him, for all practical purposes, a member of an “Indian sister-branch” of the Bka'-brgyud-pa (for the lineages, see Zhang, *Writings*, pp. 442.3-444.4).

49. There is a rather direct allusion here to Amoghapāśa (Don-yod-zhags-pa), “Lasso that Reaches its Aim,” a form of Avalokiteśvara, *bodhisattva* of compassion.

50. This and the nine preceding lines have been translated in Jackson, p. 28.

51. Compare this and the preceding four lines to the citation in Thu'u-bkwan, *Grub-mtha'*, p. 146.

52. Great Selfhood (*bdag nyid che*) is a typical Buddhist usage of an “essentialist” or “substantivist” term. Zhang Rin-po-che is not unique in employing it. It is to be found in the songs of the Indian Mahāsiddhas and in the *Bsam-gtan Mig Sgron*, etc. Buddhist thinkers are quite systematic in denying the “essentialist” usage of these terms, another example of such a term being “substantiality” (*ngo bo nyid*). One is often asked to recognize that the “absence

of essence” is what is referred to as “essence.” The same holds for “reality” concepts.

53. These two lines allude to two kinds of philosophy (*grub mtha*): 1) non-Buddhist philosophy which is to the Buddhist mind “extremist,” and 2) Buddhist philosophy conceived as the “middle way” between extremes.

54. “Object of science” translates *brtag pa'i yul*, “subject for investigation (or, analysis).” *Rtog dpyod* (“pondering and analysis”) acts as a compound word to refer to any investigation of something with a view to ascertain its causes.

55. What is being said here is that the real condition cannot really be “presented,” as the statement in quote marks implies, let alone uncompromisingly presented. “The Sage” here means Śākyamuni Buddha.

56. For another use of the same phrase, *tha snyad tshig tshogs*, see Karma-’phrin-las-pa, *Songs of Esoteric Practice*, p. 138.2 (and see also p. 23.7).

57. *Vajrasattva* (Rdo-rje-sems-dpa’).

58. This line is echoed in Karma-’phrin-las-pa, *Songs of Esoteric Practice*, p. 35.4: *’khor ba ’di la su zhig yid smon byed*, “Who would place their hopes in this vicious circle?”

59. This and the seven lines preceding find clear parallels of both substance and wording in Karma-pa I, *Selected Writings*, vol. 1, p. 324.

60. Pakshi (here spelled *dpag shi*) most generally represents a Tibetan loanword from Mongolian, meaning “a monk” (and if so it might wrongly lead us to suspicions about its presence in a pre-Mongolian period composition). This must rather be an earlier borrowing from Chinese which means “a Chinese storyteller” (see Chang, *Dictionary*, p. 1607) or an itinerant singer/storyteller/juggler. This seems the most likely explanation, especially given the mention of “song.” It is still not impossible that this could be a pre-Mongolic borrowing of a similar-sounding Uighur word (in turn borrowed from Chinese) meaning “scholar,” “learned person.” In any case, this small detail might help us to argue for Zhang Rin-po-che’s connections (even at this early date?) with the northeast, where Tibetan-Chinese-Uighur contacts were most strong, in particular with the kingdom of the Tanguts. I must acknowledge and thank Dr. Elliot Sperling (Bloomington) for his letter on the subject (August 14, 1991).

61. Literally, “set life and limb up as a target.” The same phrase occurs in Zhang, *Writings*, p. 641.4.

62. It may be of interest to note that the first three chapters of the Tibetan text are in 11-syllable verse, while all the chapters which remain are in 7-syllable verse. It may be that the first three chapters were originally meant to form an autonomous work.

63. This rather awkward-sounding term is borrowed from Jackson, since the Tibetan term (*cig char*) refers not to the *swiftness* of Enlightenment but to the accomplishment of many aims “all at once” (although in fact, as Zhang himself says, the full results of this simultaneous accomplishment may take some time to become evident), as distinguished from the gradualist’s accomplishment of one

thing at a time.

64. This particular usage of the peacock metaphor is found in Indian compositions that may have served as direct sources for these statements (although I think it was more generally “in the air”), especially in two works of Dharmarakṣita, a teacher of Atiśa, to be found in the *Blo-sbyong Brgya-rtsa* anthology (for one, in English translation, see Dharmarakṣita, *Wheel of Sharp Weapons*).

65. For the “ideal conditions,” see Sgam-po-pa’s words in Guenther (tr.), *Jewel Ornament*, chapter 2; for impermanence, see chapter 4; and for Refuge, see chapter 8.

66. For this, I refer the interested reader to the discussion in Gyatso, *Clear Light*, pp. 222-223.

67. The same ideas (and in a form that might convince us that Sa-skyia Paṇḍi-ta was familiar with Zhang Rin-po-che’s work) are found in the *Sdom Gsum Rab-dbye* of Sa-skyia Paṇḍi-ta; see Jackson, p. 107, note 111. The text available to me (Sa-skyia Paṇḍi-ta, *Sdom Gsum Rang Mchan*, p. 73.6) reads:

dbang bskur byas kyang ma thob dang //
ma byas kyang ni thob pa dang //
byas na thob la ma byas na //
mi thob pa dang mam bzhir 'dod //

It is claimed that there are four classes:

[There are those who] did not obtain empowerments even though they were done,

[who] although not done obtained them,

[who] will obtain them if done,

and [those who] will not obtain them if done.

Sa-skyia Paṇḍi-ta adds that this is nowhere taught [in the *tantras*] and is simply a pretext for stirring up (or disturbing) the teachings. This does not do justice to Sa-skyia Paṇḍi-ta’s arguments, but to do so would require a detailed study of his work as a whole. He argues quite vigorously for the necessity of empowerment for those who practice tantra, and admits of no exceptions (see especially pp. 65 and 68 of the above-mentioned work).

68. As a simile for clear and unmediated experience, this is reminiscent of Dharmakīrti’s simile for the Stage of Seeing, “As clear [or vivid] as if one were gazing at an *āmalaka* [fruit] on the palm of one’s hand.” (McDermott, “Yogic Direct Awareness,” p. 152.)

69. The chapter up to this point has been translated in Jackson, p. 64.

70. This and the three preceding lines translated in Takpo Tashi Namgyal, *Mahāmudrā*, p. 328.

71. This and the three lines preceding are cited in Thu’u-bkwan, *Grub-mtha’*, p. 148.

72. This and the six lines preceding are cited, in a partial fashion, in Thu'u-bkwan, *Grub-mtha'*, p. 148.

73. The preceding metaphors of the water down a steep mountainside (*ri gzar*), the slow river and the ocean are found in earlier sources, notably in the *Bsam-gtan Mig Sgron*, p. 162.1. See also Karma-'phrin-las-pa, *Songs of Esoteric Practice*, p. 36.2.

74. As noted in the introduction, these are the three variable components of meditative experiences.

75. "Enjoy" (*myong*). Also, "to undergo [an experience]," as in *nyams myong*, "experience," which is the subject of the chapter. The word itself also implies an "aesthetic" (*nyams*, =Skt. *rāsa*) experience, in the sense of a shared emotion (as conveyed through literary, dramatic or the plastic arts).

76. Philologist" translates *rtog ge ba*, although the term covers much philosophical endeavor as well (note Jackson, p. 95, where it is translated "dialectician"). I believe that, in Zhang Rin-po-che's use of the term, it refers to all those who have an excessively text-based (or logocentric) approach to life or who are overly fond of philological insights.

77. This is an unacknowledged quotation from the *Hevajra Tantra*, but we are supposed to know this. He cites this same verse by title in Zhang, *Writings*, pp. 697.3, 708.4. Compare Snellgrove, tr., *Hevajra Tantra*, I.viii.36. The passage which immediately follows this verse is considered a very important source-text for the Bka'-brgyud-pa understanding of Mahāmudrā, since (directly and indirectly) it mentions the Four Yogas.

78. These are the four main types of Buddhist philosophies recognized by Tibetan Buddhists, who almost invariably claim to follow the fourth, the Madhyamaka. Here the Buddhist philosophies are seen as entirely matters for meditative realization, not as the logical positivist sorts of constructionism that philosophy, when limited to its own preferred devices, ends up in. If the Mādhyamika philosopher Candrakīrti takes the yogic experience of directly seeing the world as it is as the basis for his philosophizing (Huntington, "System of the Two Truths," p. 81; McDermott, "Yogic Direct Perception"), it is difficult to justify a simple reversal of priorities holding that philosophy must *necessarily* precede the experience.

79. Text G adds a line here which translates, "Who sees immaculacy itself is entirely disentangled."

80. Text G has an interesting variant reading of *skas ka'i* ("of [a] ladder") in place of *gnyis ka* ("both"), which might result in a translation, "on a scale from high to low."

81. I read *brtan* for the *bstan* of the text. For the simile of the small lamp and the forest fire, see also Zhang, *Writings*, p. 539.3.

82. Text G inserts a line here that translates, "It is important to tend the lamp of realization [or]"

83. *Tsha tshas* are small clay plaques with Buddha and Chorten images, the letters of a *dhāraṇī* on them, or they may be miniature chortens (*mchod rten*). All the devotional practices listed here have, at least since the time of Atiśa and many of them certainly before, been done by Tibetan laypersons (except the fire offerings, which are usually done by high Lamas). I hope to return to this subject of Tibet's popular religious practices, and their history, in another place.

84. This is a slightly elusive reference to the five elixirs of Highest Yoga Tantras: excrement, urine, white *bodhicitta* (semen), red *bodhicitta* (menstrual blood), and bone marrow (or, in other lists, human flesh).

85. This most likely means the most usual "five strengths" (a different list is known to the Mind Training tradition of the Bka'-gdams-pa school): power of faith, power of perseverance, power of memory, power of meditative concentration, and power of insight.

86. These are the five sensory qualities: form, sound, taste, smell, and touch.

87. The six heaps (or, aggregates) are the sensory consciousnesses of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind.

88. This is perhaps the best translation for *mam rtog* (Skt. *vikalpa*). *Rnam rtog* is the stream of mental conflicts and concerns that rule the mind in ordinary life, and constitute the main obstacle to meditation until sufficient detachment has been developed, whereupon, at last, they can be simply left alone to follow their own course (or "play themselves out"). Elsewhere, I have just used the translation "interfering thoughts" for *mam rtog*, and what is, in this context, its near synonym, *rtog pa*.

89. This metaphor is common to the early Bka'-brgyud-pa tradition, and the words can be traced in the works of Sgam-po-pa and others.

90. The intent of the statement is that meditation and post-meditation are defined by the state of the mind, regardless whether one is in meditation posture or engaged in everyday activities. For alternative translations of this passage, see Takpo Tashi Namgyal, *Mahāmudrā*, pp. 262, 359.

91. An alternative translation of the following passage is located in Takpo Tashi Namgyal, *Mahāmudrā*, p. 360 (note there the translation of *spros bral* by "nondiscriminatory"). "Unfissured integral" is my currently favored translation of *spros bral* (Sanskrit, *niṣprapañca*), which signifies going beyond attempts to inject or subtract things into or out of reality because under the influences of mental structures, systems of thought, or emotional reactions. A fissured integral (*spros*) has thread-like tentacles that reach out and tuck the reality concept safely into experience, making sure the resulting "reality" satisfies rational and irrational demands on it. Note Huntington's ("System of the Two Truths," p. 82) translation of *prapañca* as "conceptual diffusion." Note also one modern Tibetan meditation teacher's (or his translator's?) use of the translation "simplicity" for *spros bral* (Thrangu Rinpoche, *Buddha Nature*, p. 114).

92. "Qualitative equivalence" translates *ro snyoms*, the name of the third yoga. See Takpo Tashi Namgyal, *Mahāmudrā*, p. 360, for another translation of the passage following.

93. See Takpo Tashi Namgyal, *Mahāmudrā*, pp. 361 and 394, for two different translations of the passage that follows. The preceding lines are also translated in the same work, p. 367.

94. The five Total Knowledges are Mirror-like, Equality, Particularized Understanding, Deed Accomplishing, and Dharma Realm. Together with the Three Bodies, these are especially used to characterize the Goal (see Guenther, *Jewel Ornament*, chapter 20).

95. The last 4 lines translated in Jackson, p. 76.

96. The preceding lines translated in Takpo Tashi Namgyal, *Mahāmudrā*, p. 367.

97. Tsampa is the staple of Tibetan culinary arts, a flour made from dry-roasted barley. The most usual way to eat it is by first adding butter and hot tea. Any attempt to swallow it dry would certainly result in choking, hence the very apt metaphorical usage.

98. Literally, "empty chamber" (*khang stong*). Sometimes the troubling thoughts that break through the meditative stability are conceived as robbers in an empty chamber. Since they have no way to carry out their intended actions, they naturally subside. However, here the metaphor serves for those who believe that creating a blank slate, free of troubling thoughts, is the way to Buddhahood, a position with which the early Bka'-brgyud-pa teachers in particular had no sympathy. Text G reads *kha lta yug pa* instead of *khang stong yug po*. The former might be translated, "stuck to the surface" (?).

99. These eight worldly *dharma*s include concerns for gaining profit, comfort, acclaim and good reputation; as well as concerns to avoid loss, discomfort, criticism and damaged reputation.

100. This line, which reads: *nyams myong mi gces rtogs pa gces*, is quite parallel to a citation from a Rnying-ma *tantra*, the *Kun-tu-bzang-po Che-ba la Rang Gnas-pa*, found in *Bsam-gtan Mig Sgron*, p. 51.5: *bsgoms pa mi gtso rtogs pa gtso*, "It is realization that is the main thing, not meditation."

101. For a discussion of the four *dhyānas* (Pāli, *jhāna*), see Solé-Leris, *Tranquillity and Insight*, pp. 56-72.

102. *Mi gnas myang 'das*. This means the utter *nirvāṇa* that is not placeable (*mi gnas*) in either *nirvāṇa* or *samsāra*, in the Mahāyāna system.

103. In this line, Zhang Rin-po-che seems to allude to the idea that words, as the conceptual furnishings of language, are locked in a system of mutual regard in the same manner as the objective furnishings of the world of quotidian experience. Hence, knowing the interdependent "net" of words would be to know "relativity," "voidness," Dharma Proper, Dharma Body, the very mind, substantiality, the actual condition, etc. (See Huntington, "System of the Two Truths," pp. 100-101.)

104. Lo-ras-pa Dbang-phyug-brtson-'grus was a disciple of Rgya-ras-pa (?). One source gives him the birthdate 1187 (making him too late to be quoted in a work of Zhang Rin-po-che!). However, here Lo-ras (but note text G's Lo-ro'i and text N's Lo-ros) is most likely a contraction of Lo-ro Ras-pa, a frequent name for Ras-chung-pa (the disciple of Mi-la-ras-pa) who spent much of his later life in Lo-ro (in the eastern part of Dbus, inside the Brahmaputra bend). For another "ultimate" interpretation of Refuge taking, see *Phag-gru Zhus-lan*, p. 60.5.

105. The two kinds of activities referred to are, in Tibetan, *phyogs las nram rgyal spyod pa* and *mnyam gzhas chen po'i spyod pa*. Zhang Rin-po-che implies, perhaps with tongue in cheek, that the *tantras* are clear about the phases of "tantric activity," although this is one of the points on which they are most opaque and double-meaning. See, for example, part one, chapter six of the *Hevajra Tantra*. One may also refer to Kong-sprul's chapter on action in the *Shes-bya Kun Khyab* (vol. 3, pp. 533-566).

106. Many translators in the past took *so sor thar pa* (Sanskrit, *pratimokṣa*) to mean "individual liberation" without carefully considering who the "individual(s)" might be. The code of the Vinaya enumerates quite specific things that should simply be dismissed from the realm of the possible, resulting in a great sense of relief for those who choose to dedicate themselves to the most typically Buddhist lifestyle, that of the renunciate.

107. The first eight lines here may be compared to the translation of Jackson, p. 78, while the remainder of the chapter is translated in Jackson, p. 31.

108. This is the first mention of this metaphor, which has been the subject of much controversy among Tibetan Buddhists and Tibetan Buddhologists. See Jackson and references supplied there, and especially his own forthcoming works on the subject.

109. Here, as elsewhere noted, "unplaceable" (*mi gnas*) means that it cannot be "placed" in either *nirvāṇa* or *saṃsāra*.

110. For the characteristics of the Complete Assets Body (Longs-spyod Rdzogs-pa'i Sku, Sambhoga-kāya), see the passage in Gyatso, *Clear Light*, pp. 222-223, mentioned above.

111. "With signs" means employing visualizations of letters, disks, deities, etc.; and, in the Completion Stage, the "winds" and "drops" of the subtle body. Some believe this kind of contemplation to be essential for the later materialization of divine forms (the Three Bodies) subsequent to Enlightenment. Zhang Rin-po-che suggests that the three factors of meditative experience are the true basis for the ultimate "materialization" of the Three Bodies.

112. These two types of consciousness transference (*'pho ba* and *grong 'jug*) are among the Six Yogas of Nāropa. As implied here, they may have still greater ends than the more evident ones (to project one's own or another's consciousness to a high level, or to inject one's own consciousness into another bodily vehicle).

113. Literally, “village” (*grong khyer*).

114. This refers to the *Prajñāpāramitā* and its traditional exegesis, and most specifically to the Stages of the Path outlined in the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*. The word *mtshan nyid*, here translated “philosophical,” is actually quite difficult to render in an English term. The apparent literal meaning of the word comes closer to the literal meaning of the word “semiotics” than to “philosophy.” A possible translation would be “signification.” This and preceding lines are quoted in Thu’u-bkwan, *Grub-mtha’*, p. 149.

114. As pointed out by Thu’u-bkwan, *Grub-mtha’*, p. 149, this correlation of the five “Stages” (*lam gyi rim pa*) with the Four Yogas is quite similar to the correlation (later) made by Rgod-tshang-pa (1189-1258), who says that the first Yoga corresponds to the “acting in faith” (*mos spyod*) stage [which corresponds to both the Stage of Accumulation, *tshogs lam*, and the Stage of Preparation, *sbyor lam*], the second Yoga corresponds to the Stage of Seeing (*mtshong lam*), the third Yoga is the second through seventh Levels (*sa*) [which in their totality are equivalent to the first Levels of the Stage of Cultivation (*bsgom lam*)], while the fourth Yoga corresponds to the three pure Levels [the eighth through tenth] of the Stage of Cultivation. Sa-skya Paṅḍi-ta (see his *Sdom Gsum Rang Mchan*, p. 122.5) cites a quite different correlation between the four Yogas and the five Stages. See still another explanation in Thrangu Rinpoche, *Buddha Nature*, p. 114.

115. These lines are also translated in Takpo Tashi Namgyal, *Mahāmudrā*, p. 407.

117. The preceding three lines are translated in Jackson, p. 92, while the following four lines are translated in Jackson, p. 76.

118. The jack tree (*pa na se*, Sanskrit *panasā*) has what are perhaps the largest and heaviest fruits of any tree, and the fruits grow along, rather than at the ends of the limbs. Sometimes, which seems most significant for the present metaphor, they are said to grow on the roots themselves. One must be aware in this and the following statements, that “goal,” “result” and “fruit” are the same word in Tibetan (*’bras bu*, but also the Sanskrit word *phala*).

119. The “Five Bodies” (*sku lnga*) are the usual Three Bodies 1) Dharma Body, 2) Complete Assets Body, 3) Emanation Body, with the addition of 4) Substantiality Body and 5) Unchanging Adamant Body.

120. In other words, “non-meditation.”

121. Literally, “not inert matter” (*bems min*).

122. The preceding three lines translated in Jackson, p. 29.

123. Compare the Six Perfections according to Mo-ho-yen (Gómez, “The Direct and the Gradual,” pp. 121-123). Compare also the citation from Dpal-brtsegs found in *Bsam-gtan Mig Sgron*, p. 132.2 ff. These two lists, as well as the list of Zhang, represent “ultimate” and meditation-based interpretations of the Six (or Ten) Perfections. (The source for these references is Jackson, pp. 104-5, note 105, where the citation from the *Bsam-gtan Mig Sgron* is given in full).

124. Later on, this Chos-kyi-blo-gros (a rather common name in Tibetan history) is called, in our main text, Bar-pa. However, a work of the Dalai Lama V (*Gsan-yig*, vol. 2, p. 185.6) calls him the “disciple” (*nye gnas*) Mar-pa, as does our text G. Now, Mar-pa Chos-kyi-blo-gros is the most usual name for the famous teacher of Mi-la-ras-pa, but it appears that this disciple of Zhang Rin-po-che was simply the namesake of the more famous master, albeit someone belonging to the same clan. Lists of Zhang Rin-po-che’s disciples do include an image-maker named Mar-pa Lha-dkar, although this may not be the same Mar-pa who requested him to compose this work (the latter called, in the *Rgyal-blon-ma* biography, Sgom-pa Mar-pa).

125. “Never-reified and never-deconstructed” translates *sgro bskur ye med*, which in general terms means “never from beginningless time made out to be more or less than it actually is.”

126. These “perfect endowments” (*dal ’byor*) are discussed in great detail in the *Stages of the Path* (Lam-rim) literature. See, for example, Guenther, tr., *Jewel Ornament*, chapter 2.

127. Rdor-’dzin is a short form of Rdo-rje-’dzin-pa, which is an epithet for Vajradhāra, Vajrapāṇi, and also, by extension, for tantric teachers.

128. These four sets of extreme positions may be understood so: 1. creationist positivism/ cessationist nihilism 2. eternalist positivism/ apocalyptic nihilism 3. existence positivism/ nonexistence nihilism. 4. phenomenal positivism/ emptiness nihilism.

129. The word for “sameness” here is *ro snyoms*, qualitative equivalence.

130. The possessing spirits in question here, the *gdon* spirits, are especially held accountable in Tibetan medicine for psychiatric disorders, including some specific to children.

131. This is the end of chapter 13. The following section (until the next triple asterisk) is Zhang Rin-po-che’s own colophon to his work.

132. *Sgrub brgyud*, “accomplishment transmission,” is sometimes distinguished from *don brgyud*, “meaning transmission.”

133. Compare Dpa’-bo, *Mkhas-pa’i Dga’-ston*, vol. 1, p. 769: *te los tshig gcig ma gsungs la / na ros tshig gcig ma nyan te / byin rlabs rtogs pa ’phos pas grol /* — “Tilopa did not teach one word, and Naropa did not hear one word, but was liberated by the transference of realization through blessings.”

134. Our main text reads Bar-pa, but text G reads Mar-pa. Also, the record of teachings received by the Dalai Lama V (*Gsan-yig*, vol. 2, pp. 185-186) says that his work was written at the urging of the disciple Mar-pa at Chos-bu’i Rganga-pa Brag. According to the same source, the work should end with the words, “Spoken by the Rin-po-che himself” (*rin po che nyid gsung ngo*), although these words do not occur in our text.

135. This last encomium to Zhang Rin-po-che was probably written by Ladwags Khri-dpon Padma-chos-rgyal (1876-1958), who also wrote the “printer’s colophon” (*par byang*) which is not included here (although it is included in the

text edition). It was the La-dwags Khri-dpon who compiled the thirty volume collection of Great Perfection and Great Seal teachings from which this text is taken, the so-called Tsibri Prints (*Rtsib-ri Par-ma*). For a photograph of the La-dwags Khri-dpon, who spent the later years of his life near the northern border of Nepal, see Aziz, *Tibetan Frontier Families*.

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