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BOOKS NINE & TEN

The Treasury of Knowledge

JAMGÖN KONGTRUL

JOURNEY AND GOAL



Richard Barron (Chökyi Nyima)
KALU RINPOCHÉ TRANSLATION GROUP

The Treasury of Knowledge

Books Nine and Ten

Journey and Goal

*An Analysis of the Spiritual Paths and Levels to Be Traversed
and the Consummate Fruition State*

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*An Analysis of the Spiritual Paths and Levels to Be Traversed
and the Consummate Fruition State*

Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé

KALU RINPOCHÉ TRANSLATION GROUP
under the direction of Khenpo Lodrö Dönyö Rinpoché

This volume translated, introduced, and annotated
by Richard Barron (Chökyi Nyima)

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Ven. KHENPO LODO DONYO

༡༩༩༩ ལྷ་ལ་བས་ལུང་གིས་བསྐྱུགས་ཤིང་རིས་སུ་མ་མཆིས་པའི་ཐུབ་བསྟན་ཡོངས་ཚྭ་གསུམ་གྱི་དོན་གྱི་བཤེས་གཉེན་ཆེན་པོ་
 འཇམ་མགོན་ཐོ་བློས་མཐའ་ཡས་ ༡༩༩༩-༡༩༩༩ གྱི་གསུང་མཛོད་ཆེན་མོ་པ་ལྟའི་ལ་གྲུལ་ཤེས་བྱ་ཀྱན་ལ་བྱུང་བའི་
 མཛོད་ཅེས་བྱ་བ་འདི་ཉིད་གྱི་བཛོད་བྱ་བ་ཐོན་པའི་གནས་སྤྱོད་དང་། ཚད་མ། བཟོ་དང་། གསོ་བ། སྟན་པ། མཛོད་
 བཛོད་། ལྷེ་བྱུང་། རྒྱུ་གསུམ་། སྐར་ཕྱིས་བཅས་དང་། རྩ་པར་ཐུན་མེད་དོན་རིག་པའི་གཞུང་ཐོག་པ་གསུམ་དང་།
 གསང་ཐུགས་གསར་རྟེན་གྱི་གཞི་ལམ་འབྲས་གསུམ། ལྷ་སྟོན་སྟོན་གསུམ་སྟོན་བཛོད་བྱ་བ་གསུམ་དང་། རྩོད་བྱེད་
 ལྷ་སྟོན་གསུམ་གྱི་ཆོས་སྟོན་ལུས་པའི་སྟེང་པོ་མཐའ་དག་མ་ཚད་པ་མེད་པར་འདུས་པའི་གཅིག་ཆོག་གི་གཞུང་། དཔེ་མང་ཆོལ་
 བལྟའི་རལ་བ་ལ་བརྟེན་མ་དགོས་པར་བྱེད་དང་། བྱེད་ཀྱི་གཞུང་། གནམ་པ། མན་པ། སྟོན་པ་གསུམ་གང་ལ་གང་དགོས་སུ་བོས་
 བསམ་སྟོན་གསུམ་དང་། ཉམས་ཞིབ་སྟོན་ལ་འཇུག་པར་འདོད་པའི་དོན་གཉེར་ཅན་གང་དག་ལ་མེད་དུ་མི་རུང་བའི་གཞུང་
 གལ་པོ་ཆེ་ཞིག་ཏུ་གཟིགས་ཏེ། གསུམ་ཇེ་ལ་ལྷ་ལྷོ་པོ་ཆེ་མཆོག་གིས་ ༡༩༩༩ ལོར། སྤྱི་ལོ་འཇམ་གྱིང་ཀྱན་བྱུང་ཅེས་པ་
 ཞིག་གསར་འཇུགས་དང་འབྲེལ་བྱུང་ཐུགས་པའི་ཞལ་སྟོབ་དང་། ལོ་རྩེ་བ་དུ་མ་ཞིག་བསྟོན་བསྟོན་གནང་སྟེ། ཤེས་བྱ་མཛོད་
 འདི་ཉིད་དཔྱིན་སྟངས་དུ་ལབ་སྟུང་གནང་བྱའི་དབུ་གསུངས། འོན་ཏེ་གསུམ་ཇེ་མཆོག་ཉིད་ཞིབ་པ་གཤེགས་པས་འདི་
 ཉིད་མཛོད་པའི་འཕྲོ་ཅན་དུ་བྱུང་སྟུངས། གསུམ་ཇེ་འཕོ་དགར་ལྷོ་པོ་ཆེ་མཆོག་གིས་དཔལ་ལྷན་སྟེ་མའི་དགོངས་པ་སྟོང་
 སྟངས་། ལོ་རྩེ་བ་རྣམས་ལ་འདི་ཉིད་གྱི་སྤྱི་སྟུང་ལྷ་ལྷོ་པོ་ཆེ་མཆོག་ཉིད་མཐའ་བྱིན་པ་ཞིག་གང་ལྷན་དགོས་ཚུལ་ལམ་སྟོན་བཀའ་
 སྟོབ་སྟོན་ཐུགས་འཇུག་ཆེ་བཞེས་གྱིས་ད་ཆ་ལམ་ཆེར་འབྲུབ་ལ་ཉེ་ཞིང་། ལྷག་པར་ད་ལམ་ལོ་རྩེ་བ་སྟུང་མ་ཆོས་གྱི་ཉི་མ་
 མཆོག་གིས། རྒྱ་མཚན་ཉིད་ཐོག་པ་དང་། འབྲས་བུ་ཐུགས་གསར་རྟེན་གྱི་ལམ་གྱི་རིམ་པ་རྣམས་དང་། མཐར་ཐུག་གི་
 འབྲས་བུ་གཏན་ལ་དབབ་པའི་ཚུལ་ཞིབ་པར་སྟོན་པའི་གཞུང་འདི་ཉིད་གྱི་གནས་དགུ་བ་དང་བཅུ་བ་གཉིས་དཔྱིན་སྟངས་
 ལེགས་པར་ལབ་སྟུང་བྱེད་ཏེ། ལྷ་ལྷོ་པོ་ཆེ་མཆོག་ཉིད་མཐའ་ལྷན་སྟུང་གནང་འཆར་ལགས་ན། ལོ་
 ལོ་བ་དང་། སྟོན་པའི་བདག་པོ་བཅས་ལ་སྟེང་ནས་དགའ་བས་རྗེས་སུ་ཡི་རང་དང་འབྲེལ་ལེགས་བྱས་འདིས་སྟེ་འགོ་བྱེད་དང་།
 བྱེད་ཀྱི་འཇམ་གྱིང་འདིར་ནད་ལྷག་མཚན་འཇུགས་དང་། འབྲུང་བཞིའི་འཇིགས་པ་སྟོན་པའི་བྱེད་པ་མ་ལུས་པ་ཞི་སྟེ།
 འཆོ་མེད་བྱམས་བཅེ་ཞི་བའི་དབལ་ལ་དུས་རྟག་ཏུ་འཆོ་ཞིང་། མཐར་ཐུག་རྣམ་མཁུན་རྟོགས་བྱུང་ལྷོ་པོ་ཆེ་ཐོབ་པའི་སྟོན་
 པའི་མཚམས་སྟུང་ལང་དག་པ་དང་བཅས་མཁན་པོ་སྟོན་དོན་ཡོད་གྱིས་ ༡༩༩༩ ལྷ་ ༡ ཆོས་ ༡༩ ལ། ༥༥ །



FOREWORD

BY THE VENERABLE KHENPO LODRÖ DÖNYÖ

Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé (1813–1899),¹ whose coming was prophesied by the Victorious One, was a great master in the truest sense of the title—a master of the entire range of the Sage’s teachings, without any sectarian bias. His writings are contained in five collections known as the *Five Great Treasuries*, one of which is the *Treasury of the Encompassment of All Knowledge*. The subjects discussed in this work include Sanskrit grammar, valid cognition, the arts, medicine, poetics, etymology and synonymy, prosody, drama, and astrology, but most especially the text deals with the more extraordinary and inner fields of knowledge: the three yānas, the three aspects of ground, path, and fruition according to the older and newer schools of the secret mantra approach, and the three factors of view, meditation, and conduct. Its subject matter is thus the three higher trainings, while the treatment of these themes constitutes a summary of all the essential teachings of the Three Compilations, without exception.

This *Treasury* is a work that is entirely sufficient in itself. For those who wish to study, contemplate, and meditate on any and all of the general and specific mainstream scriptural sources (as well as all manner of spiritual advice and pith instructions) and thus explore these deeply without

1. While it has been the convention among Western scholars to consider 1899 to be the year of Kongtrul’s death, the account of his death and funeral by his student Nesar Karma Tashi Chöphel states that Kongtrul passed away on the evening of the twenty-seventh day of the eleventh month of the Earth Pig Year. Given that the Tibetan year “overlaps” the Western year by at least one and a half months, Kongtrul’s death would have occurred sometime in early January of 1900. See Kongtrul, *The Autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrul*, 403, n. 30.

having to tire themselves by looking in many different sources, this work is an important, even indispensable, resource.

With this in mind, it was in 1988 that Kyabjé Kalu Rinpoché founded the International Translation Committee (Dragyur Dzamling Kunkhyab) and convened many students and translators from countries in the Western hemisphere. It was on that occasion that work began on the English translation of *The Treasury of Knowledge*. With the passing of this great master, the unfinished work continued, and it fell to Kyabjé Bokar Rinpoché to ensure that his glorious guru's intentions were realized. Bokar Rinpoché assumed this great responsibility and urged the translators involved to continue and bring it to a swift conclusion. Now the project is, for the most part, approaching completion.

The translator of this present volume, Lama Chökyi Nyima (Richard Barron), has undertaken to translate two of the books in this work—Books 9 and 10, which provide definitive discussions, respectively, of the developmental paths and levels, and of the ultimate fruition states, for both the cause-based dialectical approach and the older and newer schools of the secret mantra approach. This translation is published under the auspices of the Tsadra Foundation.

I wish to express my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to both the translator and the sponsors for their efforts, and add to this my most sincere aspirations. I pray that this noble undertaking will contribute to the alleviation of all degeneration taking place, externally and internally, for all beings in general and for this world in particular—that is, all illness, famine, war, and strife, and all harm caused by the four elements; to the ongoing glory of undying love, peace, and well-being; and ultimately, to the attainment of the precious state of omniscience and complete enlightenment!

Khenpo Lodrö Dönyö
February 23, 2007

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

More important than practicing the dharma is the *way* one practices.

(*chos sgrub pa las sgrub tshul gtso*)

—TIBETAN SAYING

This volume is part of the ongoing project founded by the Very Venerable Kalu Rinpoché (1905–1989) to produce an English translation of the *Treasury of Knowledge*, a monumental work in ten major sections by Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé (1813–1900), of whom Kalu Rinpoché is held to have been the “activity emanation.” The present volume contains a translation of the last two of the ten books that constitute Kongtrul’s masterful exposition of the entire range of thought and practice available within the Tibetan tradition of Buddhism, as well as the concluding section of the entire *Treasury* and a verse summary of it written by Kongtrul himself as a mnemonic device for his students. In Book 9, Kongtrul discusses the “journey” (the process of transformation) from varying perspectives within the Buddhist tradition, while in Book 10 he presents the “goal” (the fruition state of enlightenment to which this leads).

Every systematized school of thought, secular or sacred, has its “mind map,” a model for defining what is, in effect, a journey. Whether such a map is explicitly described or only implicitly understood, it presents an overview of the process by which the mind of the individual is shaped or transformed by that system, and so undergoes a journey, moving from one worldview, one set of values and assumptions and perceptions, to another. The Buddhist teachings are not unique in referring to this process as a “path,” and they present a very sophisticated and logical model of the progress ordinary individuals make from states of confusion and frustration to those of liberation and enlightenment. There are multiple models, for Kongtrul’s intention was not to present a single interpretation of how

this path unfolds and leads to its goal but instead to expose his readership to the entire spectrum of possibilities available to him as a master of the Tibetan tradition of Buddhism in all its diversity. It is a well-recognized fact in the Buddhist tradition that beings are of many different personality types and levels of aptitude, and that it is necessary to accommodate the needs and predispositions of a wide spectrum of individuals, rather than try to define a single, fixed model into which everyone must somehow “fit.”

While the fact has been attested to in virtually every volume of this series, it still bears repeating that the structure of the *Treasury of Knowledge* as a whole is based on the theme of the three higher trainings—those of ethical discipline, meditation, and wisdom (or, as it is rendered in this translation, sublime intelligence). This model of the higher trainings is one of several that provide an overview of the Mahāyāna teachings and allow someone approaching this enormous body of literature to begin seeing the internal logic and structure that lends these teachings so much of their inspiration and beauty. Kongtrul credits a colleague and teacher of his with suggesting the theme that eventually led to his composing the *Treasury of Knowledge*. In his autobiography, the entry for the Water Dog Year (1862–1863, when Kongtrul was fifty years old) contains the following notation:

Prior to this, Lama Karma Ngédön had urged me to write a treatise on the three levels of ordination, saying that if I did so he would write a commentary. But my feeling was that there were already any number of treatises on this subject, and that if I were to write a treatise it should be more comprehensive in scope, something that would be of use to people who had not studied much. So in the periods between my meditation sessions I had been composing the source verses to my treatise the *Encompassing of the Knowable*, a treatise dealing with the three higher trainings.¹

Thus, even when composing the source verses that eventually became the basis of his own commentary (Lama Karma Ngédön, who died in 1864, was unable to fulfill his commitment to write the commentary by the time the source verses were completed), Kongtrul expanded on this theme to include treatments of virtually every field of knowledge avail-

able within the Tibetan tradition of Buddhism in his time. The task of writing the verses that provided the skeleton that he would later flesh out with his enormous commentary took him the better part of two years (1861–1862), and with the encouragement of his guru Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (1820–1892),² he began composing the commentary, finishing (in a remarkably short time) in 1864.³ Over the next decade Kongtrul makes reference to his giving the oral transmission for the work; he must have been using his handwritten manuscript, as the woodblocks for printing the entire work (source verses and commentary) were carved beginning in 1875.⁴ The title he uses in these references⁵ is, strictly speaking, neither that of the source verses⁶ nor that of the commentary.⁷ (It is fairly common in Tibetan for there to be a “shorthand” title that refers to a text or even several texts that fall within the same category, such as the present case of the source verses and the commentary.)

It is also in his autobiography that Jamgön Kongtrul gives us an overview of the contents of the *Treasury of Knowledge*. In discussing his writings, he remarks,

Given that I have studied the teachings of the Victorious One extensively and without sectarian bias, the mark of all this study is to be found in my writings. Foremost among these are my great Treasuries, but I did not initially plan these and the thought that I should assign the name “the Five Treasuries” never entered my mind. However, once I had finished many works due to the insistent requests of my spiritual masters and mentors, my all-seeing guru, Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, prophesied on the basis of his pure vision that I would produce these five Treasuries, and bestowed on me what amounted to tables of contents for each collection of teachings.⁸

The first of the Five Treasuries is *The Encompassing of the Knowable*.⁹ This begins with an introductory section—the part that is “positive at the outset.” It discusses the title of the work, as well as the formal verses of homage and my statement of intent as the author.¹⁰

The main body of the work—the part that is “positive in the interim”—comprises ten major sections. These discuss the following topics:

- ▶ the universe as the field in which beings are guided spiritually
- ▶ the Buddha as the teacher who guided them
- ▶ the cycles of the Buddhist teachings that are the means of guidance
- ▶ the ways in which these teachings spread in India and Tibet
- ▶ the three levels of ethical discipline that serve as the foundation of spiritual practice
- ▶ a detailed analysis of the study undertaken at the outset of the spiritual path
- ▶ a detailed analysis of contemplation as the intermediate phase
- ▶ a detailed analysis of meditation as the final outcome
- ▶ the paths and levels that are traversed through these last three processes and
- ▶ the eventual way in which the fruition is gained.

Each of these ten sections has four subsections. Through these discussions, one can also come indirectly to understand the Hinayāna, the Mahāyāna, and the special enlightened intent underlying the Early Translation School's approach of the vajra pinnacle of utter lucidity. To summarize these sections, the fifth deals with the higher training of ethical discipline, the sixth and seventh with that of wisdom, and the eighth with that of meditative stability; thus they constitute the core of the work, while the rest of the sections deal with secondary topics that are the causes or results of these higher trainings.

The conclusion—the part that is “positive in the outcome”—brings the work to its completion by discussing the nature and value of the treatise and the way it was composed; as well, this part contains prayers of aspiration and benediction.¹¹

The source verses, the summary and overview, and the line-by-line commentary comprise three volumes.¹²

In his introduction to the *Treasury of Knowledge*, Kongtrul makes clear his purpose in writing the work:

In order that, at the very least, the entrance to this path may open easily to anyone whose intellect is as limited as mine, I will explain this treatise in three parts: the introduction, which provides the initial benefit of improving one's condition; the main body of the text, which has the subsequent benefit of leading one to freedom; and the conclusion, which has the final benefit of fulfilling the two objectives.¹³

It is with that "subsequent benefit of leading one to freedom" that Books 9 and 10 are concerned. With the spread of the Buddhist teachings to countries in the Western hemisphere, an area that has received less attention than it should have is the whole issue of what in Tibetan is succinctly termed "paths and levels" (*sa lam*). The emphasis in this aspect of the teachings is not on the specific methods used to progress spiritually but rather on the presentation of a coherent picture of the effects of these methods, of the actual transformation that is taking place in the individual's mind and perceptions. There is, perhaps, too often a tendency to overlook an investigation of this aspect of the teachings. Having had the opportunity to interpret during a great number of personal interviews between Tibetan teachers and their students (from Asian cultures as well as Western ones), I have been struck by how the majority of these questions have arisen due to a lack of understanding of how the whole path fits together. One may approach Buddhism with enthusiasm and sincerity, but a lack of such theoretical underpinnings can make spiritual practice seem almost random. One can get the feeling that some beings are ordinary and some are enlightened, and in between there are fascinating practices to be done, but the whole larger picture of how an ordinary being *becomes* a buddha can remain obscure. Alternatively, there can be a "honeymoon" period due to the perceived benefits that meditation brings, but without this being seen in the context of a much more far-reaching plan—one that takes us beyond the confines of purely personal benefit in the short term—the initial euphoria can lead eventually to a sense of disillusionment, even cynicism. Even a general understanding of the paths and levels to enlightenment, and the nature of the fruition state to which these lead us, can bring a sense of coherence and confidence to spiritual practice. The completion of a specific practice is then seen not simply as the accomplishment of one task simply so the next one can be undertaken but as a vital component that contributes to a marvelously

well laid-out plan that has the experience of countless practitioners over a great many generations to validate it.

The other danger, of course, is that gaining an impressive command of all the details found in these teachings on the paths, levels, and fruition state will remain solely an intellectual achievement, without the transformative power of practice. It is entirely possible that someone could become a highly educated technician, able to design an entire automobile without ever having been behind the wheel. There is obviously a need to balance theoretical knowledge with experience.

Perhaps the study of the journey and the goal appears daunting because one feels that it will make the process seem too difficult and will thus undermine one's confidence in one's spiritual practice. Kalu Rinpoché was once asked how far along the path to buddhahood he himself had progressed; he replied that if buddhahood were represented by the door to the room a few yards distant, then he had, by analogy, barely even begun rising from the chair in which he was sitting at the time. We can explain this away as pro forma Asian humility, but we can also see it as, at one and the same time, an encouragement to continue on the path oneself and a comment on the truly infinite nature of the goal of buddhahood, with the corresponding awareness of the limitations of our ineffectual attempts to quantify it from our limited perspective.

Our practice is, in fact, to be subjected to scrutiny, so that we examine the results of our efforts critically and objectively, rather than deceiving ourselves or allowing ourselves to base them on ill-founded assumptions. There is a quotation from the works of the Kagyü master Gampopa, the student of Milarepa, to the effect that "if the dharma is not practiced as the dharma is intended to be, the dharma can become a cause for rebirth in lower states of existence." The point of this somewhat startling statement (the dharma can send you to a lower realm?) is that it is, in a sense, more important to understand *how* to practice than it is to understand *what* to practice. Mere technique can be subverted by the habitual patterns of confusion and self-deception when its underlying purpose is not fully appreciated.

Confidence is necessary in order to pursue a spiritual path with diligence and energy; the complex phenomenon that is faith in the Buddhist sense includes an element of conviction and trust in the teachings and the process of practice, but this trust should be as informed as possible, not mere blind allegiance. In the final analysis, the confidence we place in our efforts to transform ourselves from ordinary beings into enlightened ones

needs to be something we can back up with proof, or at least (for the time being) with reasoned arguments.

In these last two books, as throughout the *Treasury of Knowledge*, Kongtrul's style is not polemic. He routinely presents varying interpretations of a point without himself passing judgment (although he might arguably be said to condemn by omission on occasion). In his discussions of both journey and goal, he examines the models that apply to four approaches within the framework of the Buddhist teachings:

- (1) the Hīnayāna (consisting of the śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha paths);
- (2) the common Mahāyāna path of the bodhisattva according to the sūtra tradition;
- (3) the extraordinary Mahāyāna path of the Vajrayāna tradition according to the teachings of the Sarma, or Newer, schools of the Tibetan tradition;¹⁴ and
- (4) the Early Translation School, or Nyingma, approach.

Throughout his discussions, Kongtrul makes frequent use of the term "Hīnayāna," which has come under a certain amount of criticism in recent years for being politically incorrect. It is true that it is, historically, a pejorative term, coined by the followers of the Indian Mahāyāna tradition to set themselves apart from (and above) the earlier schools of Buddhism in India. But prejudice cuts both ways, and the Mahāyānists (to say nothing of the followers of the Vajrayāna) also encountered resistance to their teachings and criticism of these as heterodox at best. To this day there are Buddhists in various parts of the world who hold the opinion that certain perfectly legitimate schools of Buddhism are nothing more than debased corruptions of the "true teachings" of the Buddha. The standpoint from which Kongtrul discusses the journey and its goal is that of a particularly broad-minded appreciation of the Tibetan tradition, in which all four of the above-mentioned models hold places of legitimacy (although not all individual Tibetans themselves might be so broad-minded!). This appreciation has become very well-known in the West as the "rimé movement," although there is little evidence to suggest that there was ever anything as organized as a movement in nineteenth-century Tibet. However, there have always been, throughout Tibetan history, a significant number of like-minded individuals who understood that the vitality and strength of the Buddhist teachings lay in a tolerance and respect for varying interpretations as expressions of the *nirmāṇakāya* principle, expressed in Tibetan

as *gang la gang 'dul*, that is, guiding beings in any way that is appropriate under the circumstances, provided that the means meet the criteria of being legitimate ways to ensure greater happiness and well-being in the shorter term and to contribute to liberation from saṃsāra and enlightenment and omniscience in the final analysis. There are echoes of this point of view even in the Indian tradition; terms such as *ātman* (self, soul) and *nitya* (permanent) were considered acceptable ways to describe the buddha nature (even though they were not, strictly speaking, orthodox Buddhist terminology, which tends to speak in terms of the nonexistence of any ultimate or permanent "thing" with its own autonomous identity) since they helped make the concept initially more accessible to non-Buddhists who were more familiar with those terms.

To return to the use of "Hīnayāna" in this translation: aside from the fact that it would seem coy to sidestep the fact that the Tibetan equivalent (*theg pa chung ngu* or *theg pa dman pa*) appears in the original, the term is not used in a derogatory manner but as indicative of a particular mentality, and this is where I would argue that the term still has validity. "Hīnayāna" does not have to be seen as referring to a group of Buddhists from a particular geographical region or a specific ethnic background; in fact, no modern day group or school (as a group or school in toto) meets the criteria for what is traditionally termed "Hīnayāna" in Kongtrul's discussions, and it is unlikely that one ever did. The term is best used as a reference to a particular *kind* of individual who may exist among Buddhist practitioners anywhere and at any time, one whose purpose in practicing is focused on personal benefit and personal release from suffering. This is not a completely unworthy aim, simply a more narrow and limited one, which is the only judgment passed on it by tradition. The frequent disdain in Tibetan circles for "the Hīnayāna" notwithstanding, the more sophisticated thinkers of the tradition accorded honor to these teachings as an integral part of the Buddha's legacy and also pointed out that there is a distinction to be made between individuals who may practice methods that are traditionally considered to derive from the teachings of the śrāvaka approach and those who might historically have adhered to a very specific set of philosophical principles. If there ever were groups of Buddhist practitioners who followed exactly the principles outlined in Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Abhidharma*, for example, there are no longer. There are, however, any number of people who, whether they are honest about it or not, are practicing their spiritual path primarily, if not

exclusively, for their own sake, with any real concern for the welfare of other beings (especially other nonhuman beings) being largely lip service. Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoché pointed out that practicing a *sādhana* from the highest class of tantra out of purely self-centered concern rendered it, in effect, a “Hīnayāna practice.” In the same vein, although the Tibetan system of monastic ordination derives historically from the Mūlasarvāstivādin school, one of the eighteen “Hīnayāna schools” that flourished in ancient India, those who receive such ordination are instructed to do so with the “Mahāyāna motivation” of upholding that discipline not simply for the individual liberation (Skt. *pratimokṣa*; Tib. *so sor thar pa*) that gives it its name but for the sake of benefiting all beings. Clearly, the proof of a yāna is in the practicing, in the attitudes and values held in the mind of the one following it.

One of the primary models that runs throughout Kongtrul's discussions of the four approaches mentioned above is that of the five paths (Skt. *pañca mārḡa*; Tib. *lam lnga*). These are technically known as the paths of accumulation, linkage, seeing, meditation, and “no more training” (or consummation). It may seem confusing to speak of a “path” being made up five “paths,” but these are sequential phases, where each preceding path prepares one for, and leads into, the succeeding one. The late professor H. V. Guenther defined this process as follows:

This Buddhist path of self-development, which culminates in an integrated personality and in the deliverance from outer and inner obstacles, comprises five stages, each of which is termed a ‘path’ because it leads to and merges in the subsequent phase as its goal. The path is therefore not an inert rod linking two equally inert terms, but a pervasive process.¹⁵

In light of the great detail into which discussions of these five paths go, it is worthwhile to have some concise overview to put them in perspective.¹⁶ Regardless of which of these five paths, or phases, we are considering, the primary issue in all Buddhist approaches is that of the liberation of one's mind from the factors (termed the “afflictive and cognitive obscurations”) that prevent one from gaining higher states of realization. The entire process of spiritual training is thus seen as a twofold one, involving at any given point the elimination of certain of the factors that obstruct a state of realization and (at the same time) the resulting state of realization

that then becomes accessible. It is for this reason that one succinct definition of buddhahood is "the consummate degree of elimination and realization" (*spangs rtogs kyi mthar thug*). In order for this twofold process to take place, one must first have felt a sense of dissatisfaction with the present set of circumstances one is in—a profound dissatisfaction with the entire state of conditioned existence that goes beyond a dissatisfaction with any personal issues that might need to be dealt with in the meantime. This lies at the very root of the path in Buddhism; the terms used to describe it (Skt. *niḥsaraṇa*; Tib. *nges par 'byung ba*) are often rendered as "renunciation," but the English word, with its negative connotations of aversion to, and fear of, the world at large, does poor justice to the sense of the original terms. This sense of dissatisfaction does not find its expression in a puritanical attitude of repression and self-denial but rather as an inspired will to become free of the limitations imposed by our present state of ignorance of our true nature and the confusion and frustration this imposes on our mind. It is based on this "will to become free" that we can and do traverse the five paths.

The first path is termed that of "accumulation," the analogy being that of someone gathering together provisions before undertaking a long journey. The point, however, of such accumulation lies in the fact that, at present, our ordinary mind is caught up in the confusion, habitual patterns, afflictive states, and ordinary concepts of dualistic consciousness, all of which are counterproductive to the main task at hand, that of discovering a direct experience of the actual nature of things. The main function of the first path, then, is to render our currently unruly and unworkable mind more adaptable to that task. In doing so, we engage in the study and practice of the teachings, activities that, while still on the conceptual level, are enormously useful and entirely in harmony with the discovery of our true nature and, attendant upon that discovery, the liberation of the mind from confusion and suffering.

The second path is that of "linkage," so called because it provides the link between the first path of accumulation and the third path of seeing, thus ensuring the continuity of the entire process while nevertheless introducing a new element, described as "anticipation of the decisive breakthrough" (Skt. *nirvedhabhāgiya*; Tib. *nges 'byed cha mthun*), which consists of four anticipatory phases. These four watershed experiences define what lies at the core of the path of linkage: the development of a sublime intelligence and insight. Although born of a process of medita-

tion that is still “mundane” (which is to say, still within a dualistic and conceptual framework, and thus still “of this world”), this intelligence heralds the direct realization of ultimate reality that constitutes the path of seeing. Having previously, on the path of accumulation, rendered one’s unworkable mind adaptable, on the path of linkage one uses this newly workable mind to focus on the main intention, that of gaining realization of this ultimate nature through directly experiencing it in a way that goes beyond concepts and dualistic consciousness.

The four anticipatory phases that make up the path of linkage are referred to as meditative warmth, the peak experience, patient acceptance, and the highest mundane experience. The name “warmth,” which is also used in a nonspecific sense to indicate a significant degree of progress in meditation practice, refers to a sense of approaching the point at which one will experience the transformative insight of the path of seeing, just as there is a sense of warmth from the friction of two sticks being rubbed together, which presages the moment at which they burst into flames.

Although it is quite brief, the second phase, that of the peak experience, is indicative of the point at which the fundamentally positive factors (“roots of virtue”) that one has been accumulating are reaching a kind of critical mass, although they are still unstable due to the fact that one’s path is still by and large based on dualistic conceptual consciousness.

Nevertheless, it is this peak that is followed immediately by the onset of the third phase, that of patient acceptance.

Acceptance in this context is that of the profundity of what one is approaching—direct experience of emptiness as the ultimate nature of phenomena, “an acceptance” (Kongtrul notes) “that parallels the path of seeing” itself. There is a humorous account in the sūtra tradition of the Buddha Śākyamuni teaching students about various aspects of emptiness, and while some present, described as being of lesser capacity, were delighted at his teaching on the emptiness of the individual self or personality, they became dismayed when he then went on to speak of the emptiness of *all* phenomena and clapped their hands over their ears lest they be forced to accept something that challenged their comfortable assumptions about the world. With this phase of patient acceptance, one’s practice has matured to the point where one is no longer daunted by the profundity of what one will soon experience directly.

The fourth and final phase of the path of linkage is that of the “highest mundane experience,” so called because although it is still within the

mundane sphere of dualistic consciousness, albeit subtle, it ushers in the path of seeing, when one makes the transition from an “ordinary mortal individual” (Skt. *prthagjana*; Tib. *so so skye bo*) to a “spiritually advanced being” (Skt. *ārya*; Tib. *’phags pa*).

The next of the five paths, the third, is the path of seeing. This, it could be argued, is where the journey truly begins. In Part 1 of Book 9, Kongtrul cites from the writings of the Indian master Jñānamitra:

Given that the paths of accumulation and linkage still pertain to this world, they do not constitute the Truth of the Path but rather are auxiliary components of the path because they cause it to come about.

The distinction is made on the basis of whether the path one is on is still “corruptible” (Skt. *āsrāvin*; Tib. *zag bcas*)—that is, still based on conceptual consciousness and so susceptible to the onset of afflictive states of mind—or incorruptible. It is with the path of seeing that one gains the insight that takes one beyond the corruptibility of the dualistic mind.

The path of seeing, then, regardless of how it is defined in a given approach, is the pivotal point in that approach, the point at which one has a definitive realization of what is authentic and meaningful in the context of the approach one is following, be it of the śrāvaka, the bodhisattva, the Vajrayāna practitioner, or the yogic practitioner of mahāmudrā or Dzogchen. To some degree, all practitioners experience an awareness (Skt. *jñāna*; Tib. *ye shes*) that constitutes insight into an authentic aspect of reality, whether it is the pristine awareness of a śrāvaka realizing the non-existence of the individual self, or the timeless awareness of a bodhisattva realizing the emptiness of all phenomena, or that of a yogic practitioner of the mahāmudrā or Dzogchen approach realizing the nature of mind.

Then there ensues the path of meditation, on which one becomes more and more familiar with the initial realization that took place on the path of seeing. Indeed, the word for “meditation” in Tibetan (*sgom pa*) is cognate to that for “to become familiar with” (*goms pa*), allowing for the delightful word play in the common saying *sgom pa ma yin goms pa yin* (“It is not so much meditation as it is getting ‘used-to’”).

The final phase is the fifth path, that of “no more training,” or “consummation.” What defines this path is the state of awakening that ensures that all factors to be eliminated—the more subtle cognitive obscurations

as well as the more obvious afflictive ones—have been eliminated. In all approaches, this constitutes the fruition state, the theme of which Kongtrul elaborates on in Book 10.

In drawing upon this model of the five paths in his discussion of the various approaches, Kongtrul is implicitly relying on a principle that is integral to the discussions of multileveled yānas. The Tibetan term for this principle is *theg pa yar ldan*, which might literally be rendered “the upward inclusion of approaches.” This refers to the fact that the schemata of the three yānas (in the Sarma schools) or the nine yānas (of the Nyingma school) is to be understood from the analogy of constructing a building. The foundation remains in place even as the upper levels are added, and the presence of higher and higher stories in no way obviates the need for that foundation. A “higher” approach is only truly superior if the individual following that approach is capable of relating to it authentically; there is a saying in the Dzogchen tradition to the effect that “it is not sufficient for the teaching to be Great Perfection; the practitioner must also be Great Perfection.” By its very nature, a higher approach incorporates the principles and accomplishments of a lower one.

An example of this is the practice of deity yoga that is found in virtually all systems of Vajrayāna. Meditating on the form of a deity brings about calm abiding of mind (Skt. *śamatha*; Tib. *zhi gnas*) through one-pointed focus, and (if done correctly) deeper insight (Skt. *vipaśyanā*; Tib. *lhag mthong*) through an appreciation of the illusion-like nature of the deity's form, the simultaneity of appearance and the emptiness of that appearance, like a reflection in a mirror. To suggest that these are the only results of deity yoga is to ignore the special efficacy of the Vajrayāna approach, but the point is that these two aspects of Buddhist meditation (cultivated in “lower” approaches through techniques such as meditation on the breath, or analytical meditation on emptiness) are not ignored or discarded but incorporated into the higher approach.

As an example of his treatment of this principle of upward inclusion, in Part 2 of Book 9 Kongtrul refers to the four applications of mindfulness that were discussed in Part 1 (in the context of the Pāramitāyāna, that is, the cause-based dialectical approach), putting them in context within the “unrivalled” approach of the tantras:

In the Vajrayāna, the stages of the path that are connected with the common factors that contribute to enlightenment (to give

one example, the applications of mindfulness that constitute the initial degree of the path of accumulation) are parallel to those found in the sūtra tradition. As for the factors that are unique to the Vajrayāna tradition, it is that everything is to be “embellished by supreme bliss.”

Let us examine this principle by giving one example: In the initial degree of the path of accumulation, the four methods found in the approach of the Pāramitāyāna are the applications of mindfulness concerning the body, sensations, mind, and phenomena. Here one meditates on these with a special emphasis. In the first case, one focuses one’s attention on mindfulness by using the framework of deity yoga, which involves the insight that “the nature of the body is one of bliss, and the essence of both body and bliss is one of emptiness.” This applies to the rest of the applications, as well. Thus, in the second application, one focuses either on the simple bliss of meditative absorption (“The nature of the sensations that are felt as painful in light of confusion is that of the illuminating aspect of mind, and in essence that is supremely blissful”) or on the methods that induce “melting bliss.” In the third application, one understands, “Although all the avenues of consciousness associated with the senses are alike in that they are emptiness in essence, their nature is one of nonconceptual timeless awareness, which is the cause of supreme bliss.” And in the fourth application, one understands, “All manifestations on the physical level of the body and all states of ordinary mind are, in their essence, emptiness, but for those who fail to recognize these as such, they act as causal factors that perpetuate confusion. Nevertheless, their nature remains that of supreme bliss.” In all of these cases one integrates one’s awareness with the unity of bliss and emptiness.

In Part 1 of Book 9, Kongtrul presents the paths and levels as discussed in the teachings of the dialectical approach, referred to as a “cause-based approach” (Skt. *hetuyāna*; Tib. *rgyu'i theg pa*) because its practical application is based on a view of establishing causes in the present that lead to results at some future point. This is in distinction to the “fruition-based” approach of the Vajrayāna, which is based on the understanding that one’s buddha nature is already innate and complete as the fruition

state and waiting to be discovered, not an embryonic potential that itself requires some assistance for it to come to full expression. (Of course, the distinction between cause-based and fruition-based approaches is a retroactive device of the Vajrayāna, just as the term “Hīnayāna” could have been coined only by a Mahāyāna author.) In his presentation of the model of the five paths, rather than following the usual pattern of discussing the śrāvaka, prātyekabuddha, and bodhisattva approaches separately, Kongtrul blends his treatment of them while still emphasizing the distinctions between them. In turning his attention to the levels, he focuses on the “levels associated with buddhahood,” that is, the model of the bodhisattva’s ten levels of realization (Skt. *daśa bhūmi*; Tib. *sa bcu*).

In Part 2 Kongtrul turns his attention to the paths and levels as discussed in the teachings of the Vajrayāna. His specific focus is on the Anuttarayoga tantras of the Sarma schools (that is, those founded from the eleventh century C.E. onward, during the later wave of translations being introduced to Tibet from India) and the system that is unique to the Kālacakra cycle, considered to be the highest of those tantras. He then pays particular attention to the interpretations of such Tibetan masters as the third Karmapa of the Karma Kagyü school, Rangjung Dorjé (1284–1339), who is for that school perhaps the foremost interpreter of the tantras, through such works as his seminal treatise the *Profound Inner Meaning* (*Zab mo nang don*). Kongtrul’s treatment of the model of progress is based heavily on the more advanced yogic practices that pertain to the stage of completion (Skt. *sampannakrama*; Tib. *rdzogs rim*) according to the Anuttarayoga tantras. His emphasis is on the developmental experience brought about by such practices, rather than on the specific techniques employed, which he discusses elsewhere in the *Treasury of Knowledge*, specifically in Book 8, Parts 3 and 4 (published in the *Treasury of Knowledge* series as, respectively, *The Elements of Tantric Practice* and *Esoteric Instructions*).

Part 3 of Book 9 is devoted to a detailed description of “conduct” (Skt. *carya*; Tib. *spyod pa*). This principle normally figures in a triad, as the third component of spiritual practice after “view” (Skt. *drṣṭi*; Tib. *lta ba*) and “meditation” (Skt. *bhāvana*; Tib. *sgom pa*); a fourth component, “fruition” (Skt. *phala*; Tib. *’bras bu*), is sometimes added. The general formula is that one develops a view, or framework for practice, through both study and contemplation or a significant degree of direct experience. This is then cultivated and made more familiar to one through meditation. Conduct is the way in which the inner realization one gains through view

and meditation expresses itself in the way one perceives and acts in the world. Because it provides a more dramatic enactment of that realization, if properly undertaken, conduct can accelerate one's spiritual journey through the paths and levels, an effect that is known as "enhancement." Progress that would take place in any case is swifter when this enhancement comes into play. Of the many variations on this theme of conduct, Kongtrul focuses in particular on the interpretation in the Anuttarayoga tantras and gives a very detailed treatment of the *gaṇacakra* ritual as the vehicle for the enhancement of practice in the higher tantras.

Kongtrul began life as a follower of the indigenous Tibetan tradition of Bön, although the man who raised him in that tradition was only his nominal father (his biological father having been a Buddhist lama). His formal Buddhist training, however, began when he was sixteen years of age, in 1828, when he was introduced to Gyurmé Tutop Namgyal, the Öntul incarnation of the Nyingma monastery of Zhechen,¹⁷ who became Kongtrul's first Buddhist teacher. He excelled at his study and practice of this school until the point almost five years later when, due to his talents and intelligence, he was conscripted to serve at Palpung, the main Kagyü monastery of eastern Tibet and seat of the Tai Situpa incarnations. There he began his study and practice of the system of the Sarma school of the Kagyü. Although the Nyingma and Kagyü are historically the most closely connected of the Tibetan schools, Kongtrul nevertheless felt that he had drifted from his Nyingma roots. In his autobiography, he relates a disturbing dream he had in 1836:

At that point, forgetting that I had previously recognized this to be a dream, I began to get frightened and awoke. I was sure that this showed a karmic block because during that period, due to my thinking of myself as a Kagyü practitioner, I had allowed my interest in the Nyingma teachings to diminish somewhat. In the wake of this dream, I simply regretted the fact and confessed it.¹⁸

He made renewed efforts to receive teachings from the Nyingma tradition and to incorporate its methods into his regular spiritual practice but almost ten years later he still felt conflicted by the demands he felt from himself and others to adhere to the Kagyü school:

I had a meditation experience one day while I was attending the tenth-day ceremony in the sixth month. I very clearly saw a form of Orgyen Rinpoché, at first two-dimensional, like a painting, then actually present. . . . Although I feel that these kinds of Nyingma ceremonies and rituals can transmit an enormous amount of blessing, nevertheless I have felt that the contamination of impairing my *samaya* connection with this lineage [had grown] stronger with time, [although] I later took part in many Nyingma *drupchen* rituals.¹⁹

In 1840 Kongtrul first met Jamyang Khyentsei Wangpo,²⁰ who became his main guru and with whom he shared a passionate concern for the preservation and promulgation of all the authentic lineages of Buddhism. This relationship helped Kongtrul enormously in broadening his spiritual horizons, as well as rediscovering his Nyingma roots, a process that received a further boost when he met the Nyingma tertön Chokgyur Dechen Lingpa in 1866 (by which time Kongtrul had already been involved for several years in collecting the teachings that would become his enormous collection, the *Treasury of Precious Hidden Teachings* [*Rinchen Terdzö*]). The following year, Khyentsé Rinpoché and Chokgyur Lingpa reinforced Kongtrul's personal connection to the Nyingma tradition in a moving ceremony:

After the celebrations for the new Fire Hare Year [1867–1868]—the first year in the fifteenth sexagesimal cycle²¹—I undertook my annual personal retreat on Vajrakila and concluded with a ritual to avert negativity. During the second month I went to Dzongshö, where the great tertön Chokgyur Lingpa was staying, having asked his permission to do so the last time we had met. . . . My lord guru [i.e., Jamyang Khyentsei Wangpo] also came. . . . Seating me on a throne made of stones, the two of them invested me with the title of a tertön and performed a ceremony for my long life.²²

Given this background, it is little wonder that for the rest of his life Kongtrul accorded great respect to the Nyingma teachings in general and those of the Dzogchen tradition in particular, so much so that the entire

third year of the three-year, three-fortnight retreat program at his hermitage was devoted to the practice of an important cycle of Dzogchen meditation.²³

The final part of Book 9, then, is devoted to the path and levels of the spiritual journey as they are taught in the “three yogas”—Mahā, Anu, and Ati—of the Nyingma, or most ancient, school of the Tibetan tradition of Buddhism. Once again the model of the five paths forms a thread that runs through all three yogas. In his discussion of Atiyoga, however, Kongtrul begins with a statement that defines the uniqueness of Atiyoga as the ninth of the “nine yānas” model of the Nyingma school and the single approach based on timeless awareness rather than some aspect of ordinary mind, however subtle:

In this effortless approach of Atiyoga, the state of utter lucidity is made fully evident in one’s experience, and so one is already engaged in lower approaches (primordially so); this approach transcends the concerted effort required to traverse some graduated path, or to follow some step-by-step process of refinement. So the Dzogchen, or Great Perfection, approach is said to consist of a single level and to require no process of refining away or traversing anything, for the intention underlying this statement is that when the higher approach is completed, the lower ones are completed as a matter of course. The single level referred to is that of pure and spontaneously present awareness. . . . Nevertheless, even in this specific path it is necessary for one to be purified of distortions affecting the three avenues of one’s being, of the physical body, of thoughts stirring the mind, and of the more obvious expressions of the interaction between subtle energy and mind. When one is purified of these, the paths and levels of lower approaches are completed as a matter of course; therefore, while the Dzogchen approach parallels these lower approaches, it is far superior to them, for on its single level are all the factors of manifest realization that can be differentiated as aspects of timeless awareness and the qualities of enlightenment.

With the popularization of Dzogchen in recent times, there is a danger that the full majesty of the Dzogchen approach, which Kongtrul presents

here and which embraces and fulfills all the principles found in the so-called lower approaches, will become watered down to an overly simplistic version that could seem to invalidate them.

Book 10 concerns the goal—that is, the fruition state in the various Buddhist approaches. Again Kongtrul begins, in Part 1, with a discussion of the meaning of “nirvāṇa” in light of the three approaches (of śrāvaka, pratyekabuddha, and bodhisattva) and the Mahāyāna understanding of the state of buddhahood, presenting in great detail a rich and manifold vision of the state of complete enlightenment.

Part 2 is concerned with a theme that is very central to the Vajrayāna yet is often puzzling to Westerners: that of spiritual attainments (Skt. *śiddhi*; Tib. *dnogs grub*). Included in this discussion is a treatment of the Khecara, the pure realm of experience particularly emphasized in the cycles of Vajrayoginī practice.

Part 3 of Book 10 focuses on the fruition state as it is described in the Vajrayāna teachings, again primarily from the point of view of the Sarma schools. Here, as throughout Books 9 and 10, Kongtrul attempts to show the parallels inherent in the seemingly divergent models of the traditions of sūtra vis-à-vis tantra, while still maintaining the integrity of each and emphasizing the extraordinary profundity of both.

Part 4, the final section of Book 10, turns once more to the Nyingma interpretation of the fruition state. Here he draws on the two predominant models: that based on the tantra known as the *Web of Magical Display*²⁴ and that based on the “Vajra Heart Essence of Utter Lucidity,”²⁵ which is to say, the Atiyoga approach (in turn based on the teachings found in the seventeen Dzogchen tantras) and more specifically the teachings contained in the cycles known in Tibetan as Nyingtik (*snying thig*). Although Kongtrul does not cite them as sources directly, it is clear that much of his discussion owes itself to the writings of Longchen Rabjam (kLong chen rab 'byams, 1308–1364), perhaps the greatest scholar the Nyingma tradition has ever produced.

Also included in this volume is the concluding section to the entire *Treasury of Knowledge*, which follows as traditional a format as does the introductory section (published in the volume *Myriad Worlds* in the Treasury of Knowledge series), discussing the nature of the work as a whole, Kongtrul's purpose as an author in writing it, the process of composition, and finishing with prayers of aspiration for the work to bring benefit to others, an acknowledgement of any errors that may have occurred, and

auspicious wishes to bring the entire venture to a conclusion on a celebratory note.

A problem that can arise in the translation of texts lies in the fact that Tibetan authors usually cite from memory, and while their memories were prodigious, they occasionally quote a given source as saying something that is from a completely different source, or in words that do not exactly match the original source in the form in which it has come down to us. Variant readings, where significant, have been noted in the endnotes. There are a few cases in which Kongtrul's version tallies with another translation of the source than the one found in the Dergé edition of the Kangyur and Tengyur. (It would appear that Kongtrul had access to other editions, since some of the sources he cites are not found in the Dergé edition at all.) In such cases, the version found in the Dergé edition has been provided in an endnote. Every effort has been made to trace the sources cited throughout the two books of the *Treasury*, but there are times when Kongtrul either assumes that the passage he cites is so familiar to his audience that it requires no explanation or is himself not sure of the source. The Tibetan tradition is replete with familiar quotations from scripture that are on the tip of every well-trained teacher's tongue (or pen) but are so much part of the landscape that their origins are never subject to inspection.

Much of what Kongtrul cites is in verse, and I am the first to admit that I have no talent as a poet, and so have made no attempt to render the English in meter. The fact that a Tibetan (or Sanskrit) text is in metered verses does not necessarily mean that the author intended it as poetry in the aesthetic sense (although some sources, in both languages, are literary as well as spiritual masterpieces), but rather as didactic information that could be more readily memorized in verse form. Artistic considerations come a distinct second. Sanskrit terms and names have been rendered with diacritics, and the Wylie transcription of Tibetan words provided (with place and personal names phoneticized in the text and transcribed in the endnotes). I have made attempts to translate the titles of texts but have provided the Sanskrit and Tibetan titles in the Bibliography of Works Cited. Folio numbers embedded in the text refer to the four-volume edition of the *Treasury of Knowledge* published in 1997 by Shechen Publications.

It has been more than twenty years since Kyabjé Kalu Rinpoché first put forth the idea of having the entire *Treasury of Knowledge* translated

into English, and although I am sure that he and everyone concerned with the project would have hoped that it were finished before this, it is gratifying to know that the project is approaching completion, with only two volumes remaining to be published in the next two years or so. It took the Tibetans several centuries to assimilate the Indian tradition of Buddhism; despite the much more rapid pace of modern life, it will surely take us some time to do the same. With so many people involved in the project, it is inevitable that the series will contain varied translation and writing styles as well as choices of vocabulary. In a way, this is to be expected. In his *Treasury of Knowledge*, Kongtrul wrote on a wide variety of subject matters, and the translation of Buddhist thought into a Western idiom is still in its relative infancy. We are still far from having a standardized English vocabulary for all but a few key Buddhist terms. With this in mind, I have included a word list giving the equivalents in Tibetan and Sanskrit (where available) for the English terminology I have used in this book.

I wish to express my deep appreciation to the Tsadra Foundation for the support that made it possible for me to complete this translation and especially to Eric Colombel and Anthony S. Chapman (Lama Drupgyu Tendzin) for their generous and ongoing efforts to ensure the preservation, translation, and practice of the Buddhist teachings. I have received invaluable help in preparing this translation from a number of teachers and friends, in particular Yongey Mingyur Dorjé Rinpoché, Khentru Lodrö Tayé Rinpoché, and Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen. It is traditional that I specify that any faults are my own and not in any way due to these teachers; it also happens to be true. Nevertheless, it is my hope that this translation will do some justice to the original and contribute to the understanding of the vast and profound body of knowledge that is the Buddhadharma. I also wish to express my sincere thanks to Michael Wakoff for editing the manuscript and to L. S. Summer for preparing the index.

Richard Barron
May 2009

BOOK NINE:

*An Analysis of the Spiritual Paths
and Levels to Be Traversed*

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THE SOURCE VERSES

Part 1. The Paths and Levels in the Cause-Based Dialectical Approach

The Paths of the Dialectical Approach [I]

Essential Quality of a Spiritual Path [A]

A spiritual path is, in essence, a passage that allows one to traverse to more sublime states.

Analytical Enumeration of the Paths [B]

Paths can be analyzed as the three approaches, as corruptible or incorruptible, and so forth;
although there are many such analyses, the most common format accepted by everyone is that of five paths.

Derivation of the Term [C]

As for the derivation of the term, it is a “path” because it is the basis of what is to be traversed.

Distinction between Actuality and Imputation [D]

For śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, the path (involving progress) is actual, while the fruition is nominally imputed.
For the Mahāyāna, the path is imputed, while the fruition (the consummation of that progress) is actual;
direct realization is actual, while its preparatory paths are imputed.

Extensive Explanation of the Paths [E]

The Path of Accumulation [1]

Characteristics [a]

The path of accumulation is composed of positive factors that anticipate liberation.

Basis [b]

The basis being characterized is one of striving at hearing teachings, meditating, and so forth.

Analysis [c]

Cultivation of the applications of mindfulness, aspects of correct renunciation, and bases of supernormal powers—this path has three degrees (that is, initial, intermediate, and final).
Alternatively, this path is analyzed into four stages, that of the beginner and so forth.

Nature [d]

There are three distinctive features: onset, dependence, and what one focuses on.

Distinctive Processes [e]

More overt factors are eliminated, and the lack of identity is realized in a theoretical way.

Qualities [f]

On the basis of spiritual potential, attitude, and conduct, one is endowed with five qualities.
One gains the ongoing qualities of deeper levels of insight, levels of deeper discernment, and meditative absorption.

Function [g]

In these degrees (initial, intermediate, and final), the Four Truths and two levels of truth are mentally embraced,
 which causes one to turn away from the four kinds of erroneous
 opinions and the conception of things as real;
 counterproductive factors are eliminated, while positive qualities are
 aroused and increased;
 the eight thought patterns are eliminated, and meditative absorption is
 brought to a one-pointed focus.

Derivation of the Term [h]

As for the derivation of the term, this path involves the accumulation of
 positive factors to make one a suitable recipient;
 it is also the path that anticipates liberation, that of faith, and that of
 direct confrontation.

The Path of Linkage [2]

Characteristics [a]

The path of linkage provides the context for the direct realization of
 what is ultimate.

Basis [b]

It is the sublime intelligence that derives from meditation in a mundane
 framework.

Analysis [c]

While there are many ways to analyze this path (such as the natural
 progression of dedicated intent),
 once timeless awareness is experienced as the onset of meditative
 warmth,
 with the stirring of fundamentally positive factors,
 one gains patient acceptance of the profound nature of phenomena
 and the highest mundane experience.

These four phases involve the cultivation of five governing powers and five strengths, one group for each pair of phases.

Meditative Warmth [i]

Peak Experience [ii]

Patient Acceptance [iii]

Highest Mundane Experience [iv]

Nature [d]

The distinctive features are: those in whom it awakens, what level it entails, and what one focuses on.

Distinctive Processes [e]

There is elimination since the obscuring layer of conceptual labeling is done away with;
and there is involvement through a process of realizing the two ways in which any independent nature is lacking.

Qualities [f]

One is endowed with qualities such as experiencing no interruption and no falling.

Function [g]

The misperception of things having identity is eliminated, and there is the onset of the first level.

Derivation of the Terms [h]

As for the derivation of the terms, these are “phases that anticipate the decisive breakthrough,”
“engagement through firm conviction,” and “linkage” to the direct realization of ultimate reality.

The Path of Seeing [3]**Characteristics [a]**

The path of seeing is the fresh new perception of suchness, . . .

Basis [b]

. . . a transcendent harmony
of calm abiding and deeper insight . . .

Analysis [c]

. . . that is indivisible in its very essence.
One trains primarily in the seven aids to enlightenment.

Nature [d]**Elimination on the Path of Seeing [i]**

The factors to be eliminated on the path of seeing are 88, 94,
112, and so forth. It is held that they are eliminated through processes
that cause the cessation of prior influences
and cause new influences to come into being, and through the
awakening of nondual timeless awareness.

Characteristics of the Factors to Be Eliminated [aa]**Detailed Analysis of the Factors to Be Eliminated [bb]****How These Factors Are Eliminated [cc]****The Onset of the Path of Seeing [ii]**

There are four distinctive features: onset, dependence, the way
realization occurs, and sequential steps.

Distinctive Processes [e]

How things are is perceived directly; how many there are is realized in
some appropriate manner.

Qualities [f]

There is freedom from five states of fear, and there are twelve hundredfold qualities.

Function [g]

This frees one from conditioned existence and ensures one's gaining the level of nirvāṇa.

Derivation of the Term [h]

This is incorruptible virtue, the antidote involving elimination, the initial arousal.

The derivation of the term lies in the direct experience of what is free of elaboration.

The Path of Meditation [4]**Characteristics [a]**

The path of meditation involves situations in which one becomes familiar with distinctive states.

Basis [b]

That direct realization is integrated into one's ongoing experience.

Analysis [c]

The corruptible path of meditation can be understood from the foregoing discussions.

For the incorruptible transcendent path, the working bases are those of the śrāvaka, pratyekabuddha, and bodhisattva.

It includes four pathways: that of linkage, that without obstacles, that of complete freedom, and that of distinctive features. In essence, it is of greater, middling, or lesser degrees.

Analyzed as to what is becoming familiar (that is, meditative equipoise or postmeditation awareness), it is twofold.
One trains in the eightfold path of noble ones.

Nature [d]

The 414 factors to be eliminated on the path of meditation are removed through antidotes.

The distinctive features are those in whom it awakens, what level it entails, and what one focuses on.

Elimination on the Path of Meditation [i]

The Development of the Path of Meditation [ii]

Distinctive Processes [e]

It is the cognitive obscurations that are primarily eliminated, and the actual nature of phenomena is truly realized.

Qualities [f]

The distinctive qualities continue to increase.

Function [g]

One traverses the ten successive levels, becoming free of latent obscurations.

Derivation of the Term [h]

The term derives from the process of bringing familiarity with realization.

The Path of Consummation [5]

Characteristics [a]

In the path of consummation, there is direct realization of the consummate degree of what is cultivated in meditation.

Basis [b]

The basis underlying these characteristics is the vajralike samādhi at the very threshold of enlightenment, the level of Total Illumination, and so forth.

Analysis [c]

This path is analyzed according to three approaches, two paths, three levels, and so forth.

The ten factors that require no more training are included within the five incorruptible components.

Nature [d]

The nature includes those in whom it awakens, what level it entails, and what one focuses on.

Distinctive Processes [e]

All hindrances having been eliminated, there is realization of reality just as it is and of things in all their multiplicity.

Qualities [f]

The qualities, both common and especial, are inconceivable.

Function [g]

This makes evident the kāyas and aspects of timeless awareness without exception.

Derivation of the Term [h]

As for the derivation of the terms, these are “the foundation of incorruptible virtue,”
 “the antidote to conditioned existence,” and the completion of both the journey and the training.

The Levels of the Dialectical Approach [II]

Two Kinds of Levels [A]

Overview [1]

As for the levels, in the broadest sense these are of two kinds: those of freedom from attachment and those of buddhahood.

Extensive Explanation [2]

The Levels of Freedom from Attachment [a]

The levels are called those of “spiritual potential,” “the eighth,” “seeing,” “subtlety,” “freedom,” “realization,” “the śrāvaka,” and “the pratyekabuddha.”

The Levels Associated with Buddhahood [b]

There are said to be ten bodhisattva levels in the Mahāyāna approach.

Distinctions between These Levels [B]

There are distinctions concerning supernormal powers, levels of deeper discernment, realization, meditation, insight, language, spiritual teaching, benefit ensured, and nirvāṇa.

Extensive Explanation of the Levels Associated with Buddhahood [C]

Essence [1]

In essence, these levels are the foundation for superior qualities.

Basis of Characteristics [2]

The basis for what is so characterized is the unity of means and awareness in the ongoing experience of one undergoing training.

Derivation of the Term [3]

As for the derivation of the term, it implies “support,” “attainment,” “dispensing with,” and “proceeding further and further.”

Analysis [4]

The analysis concerns ordinary individuals and spiritually advanced beings;
 the four ways in which attainment comes through intent, application, realization, and accomplishment;
 nonaccomplishment versus accomplishment;
 and pride, whether a good deal, little, or none.

Distinctive Features [5]

The Utterly Joyful One, The Immaculate One, The Illuminating One, The Radiant One,
 The One Who Meets the Challenge, The One Who Makes Evident, The One Who Has Gone Far, The Immutable One,
 The One of Brilliant Intelligence, The Cloud of Dharma— . . .

Thorough Training and Progress [b]

. . . with thorough training, one progresses in stages.

Spiritual Practice and Individual Practitioner [c]

One engages primarily in the specific transcendent perfections of the ten levels, generosity and so forth.
 These entail pure view and discipline, meditative equipoise, an absence of preconceptions,
 attainment of intelligence, refinement, maturation, complete perfection, and empowerment.

The Three Higher Trainings and Components of Practice [d]

On six levels there are the three higher trainings, while on four the results of these are ensured.
 With the realization of the actual nature of phenomena, five components of practice are successively refined.

Purity, Elimination, and Realization [e]

Endowed with three causes, what is fundamentally positive becomes ever purer.

Cognitive obscurations are gradually eliminated, and ten aspects of timeless awareness are ensured.

Specific Qualities and States of Rebirth [f]

One gains qualities from the first level, with its twelve hundredfold qualities,
to the tenth, where these qualities are as incalculable as the atoms in the universe.

From the eighth level onward there are the ten kinds of control over longevity and so forth,
and on the tenth one receives the “empowerment of supreme radiance.”
One takes rebirth through the power of karma, aspirations, meditative absorption, and mastery.

Those abiding on these levels take rebirth, as a natural consequence, as world rulers.

Definitive Rationale for Ten Spiritual Levels [6]

Although they are alike with respect to meditative equipoise, due to distinctions in the certain knowledge gained in postmeditation and the thorough training, there are definitely ten levels.

*The foregoing constitutes the first part
concerning the paths and levels in the cause-based dialectical approach.*

Part 2. The Levels and Paths in the Vajrayāna

The Connection between Vajrayāna Meditation and the Thirty-seven Factors [I]

In the tantric approach, the ordinary methods of spiritual practice accord with those of the sūtra approach, while the more unique ones are those embellished by supreme bliss.

The Special Nature of the Tantras and Oral Instructions [II]

Intent of the Anuttarayoga Tantras [A]

The Path of Accumulation [1]

In particular, one invokes timeless awareness by meditating on the stages of development and completion.

In the initial degree of the path of accumulation, meditative equipoise consists of these two stages, while in postmeditation benefit is ensured by applying the methods of the tantras.

In the intermediate degree, meditation does not falter, even in dreams, while one gains the final degree through the realization that brings one mastery of timeless awareness.

The Path of Linkage [2]

Meditative Warmth [a]

Striving at practicing the stage of completion, through the realization associated with the three successive steps of subtle experience, one gains the meditative warmth of the path of linkage; . . .

The Peak Experience [b]

. . . through the practice of karmamudrā comes the greatest degree of complete attainment.

The consummate experience that foreshadows the actual state of utter lucidity is a constant presence.

On the basis of that, one's subtle energy and mind are realized in the embodiment of the deity: this is the peak experience.

Until the eighty overt patterns of thought have been eliminated, . . .

... one trains in the twenty-four sacred sites and joins the gathering of vajra heralds,
and so the subtle elements of *pujā o a* are arrested
within the central channel: this is the first level on the path of linkage.

In a similar manner, there are secondary sites—Go, Ra, De, Ma, Kā, O, Tri, Ko, Ka, Lam, Kā, Hi, Pre, Gṛ, Sau, Su, Na, Si, Ma, and Ku—
known as Domain, Inner Domain, Intent, Inner Intent, Gathering, Inner Gathering, Charnel Ground, and Inner Charnel Ground;
these points in the body are purified in pairs. One traverses ten levels. Quenching of Thirst and Inner Quenching of Thirst are assigned to the enlightened embodiment of timeless awareness on the path of seeing. . . .

Patient Acceptance and the Highest Mundane Experience [c]

... At that point, in both meditative equipoise and postmeditation, due to the conduct of the ongoing cycle of bliss and emptiness, that of the consort, one gains patient acceptance. With the awakening of manifest timeless awareness,
there is the highest mundane experience. . . .

The Path of Seeing [3]

... The third step is that of innate awareness;
one uninterruptedly perceives the ultimate state of utter lucidity. One has received the empowerment into *nirmāṇakāya* and eliminated the potential for ordinary thought.
The enlightened embodiment of nondual timeless awareness is achieved.

The Path of Meditation [4]

The factors eliminated on the path of meditation are analyzed into nine degrees of the three successive steps of subtle experience, lesser and greater.

With progressive elimination, the most subtle aspects of mind, mental events,
and of the mind-body aggregates, sense fields, and components of perception are transformed. . . .

The Path of No More Training [5]

. . . At the final limit of the continuum of this path,
one receives empowerment from the sambhogakāya. There is no more training.

The Kālacakra Tradition [B]

The Path of Accumulation [1]

In the Kālacakra tradition, through the stage of development and the process of consolidation,
one traverses the final degree of the path of accumulation. . . .

The Path of Linkage [2]

The Four Anticipatory Phases [a]

. . . Meditative stability brings one to meditative warmth.
Harnessing and channeling subtle energy brings one to the intermediate degree; attention, to the greater degree.
Recollection brings one to the peak experience, and meditative absorption to patient acceptance and the highest mundane experience.

The Levels of Meditative Absorption [b]

On this path there are twelve lower, or conceptually designated, levels.
At that point, beginning with aging and death back to ignorance,
the twelve links and their attendant subtle energies are arrested. With each group of three,
one of the situations of ordinary body, speech, mind, and thought patterns based on attachment is eliminated.
The four vajras of the path are accomplished. The eleventh level brings patient acceptance, the twelfth the highest mundane experience, . . .

The Path of Seeing [3]

The Actual Path of Seeing [a]

... while the final moment constitutes the path of seeing, the enlightened embodiment of timeless awareness.

The Distinctive Features of the Path of Seeing [b]

At that point, this serves as the foundation for superior qualities, these special levels being those of "Total Illumination," "Nectar," "Space," the lights of "Vajra," "Jewel," and "Lotus," "Activity," "Incomparable," "Endowed with Metaphor," "Light of Sublime Intelligence," "Omniscience," and "Pure Discerning Awareness." These twelve are attained simultaneously. These are distinct aspects that remain present until buddhahood.

The Path of Meditation [4]

Next is the path of meditation: the level of Abode, or The Utterly Joyful One, and the rest. Since the transcendent branches are in equal measure, one traverses, just as one wishes, the levels that are the supreme higher context.

The Path of Consummation [5]

The consummation is the swift attainment of the actual state of Vajrasattva. This especially exalted tradition is the presentation of the Great Venerable One.

The Vajrayāna Traditions of Tibet [III]

Preliminary Remarks [A]

In the widely known tradition of the past, from Rangjung Gyalwa and others, ...

Paths [1]**The Path of Accumulation [a]**

... receiving empowerment, practicing development and completion, practicing with conviction, having meditative experiences that are still corruptible yet nonetheless excellent, and integrating sense pleasures into the path, one traverses the beginner's level and the path of accumulation. . . .

The Path of Linkage [b]

... With a foreshadowing and the experience of the hidden meaning of the illusory body, through the four descending gradations of joy, one traverses the level of practicing out of a sense of dedication and the four phases of the path of linkage. . . .

The Path of Seeing [c]

... One beholds the actual state of utter lucidity.

The Path of Meditation [d]

With the stabilizing of subtle vital essence in an ascending manner, there is the experience of primordial unity that still involves training: the path of meditation. . . .

The Path of No More Training [e]

... No more training is consummation—the actual enlightened embodiment of timeless awareness.

The stages are due to the actions of beginners practicing by bringing this into their experience. The progress is either developmental or nonlinear.

Levels [2]

Manifest Realization in the Levels [a]

The Graduated Path [b]

One attains these levels through the successive moments of supreme and unchanging bliss, which derives from the passion of sublime intelligence.

The first step stabilizes the masculine and feminine essences in the glans and the crown of the head.

A single breath is arrested and nonduality is beheld.

Whatever is perceived is experienced as bliss, and one gains powerful mastery of the world.

In succession, 1,800 moments are completed.

An equal number of expressions of the subtle energy of karma are arrested, as is ignorance.

In the lower half of the secret cakra and the upper half of the very crown of the head,

the masculine and feminine essences are stabilized, and the lesser gradation of joy and emptiness is perfected.

One attains the first level, named Abode and The Utterly Joyful One.

A single blockage is freed and ascent to the first level achieved.

One becomes a foremost and supreme master of generosity.

Next, in ten series of 1,800 moments

there is successive completion and successive arrest.

The six cakras are stabilized by halves, with three blockages freed in each.

With the freeing of a final one, through ascent in stages, there is total completion of the twelve aspects of the meaning of truth and 21,600 moments of unchanging bliss.

In like number, the twelve junctures, the expressions of subtle energy, and the twelve links of interdependent origination (the cycle of conditioned existence) are arrested.

The full moon at the very crown of the head and the sun in the glans are stabilized.

The furthest limit of the transcendent perfections is reached, and the processes of elimination and realization are thoroughly completed.

There is the completion of the sixteen degrees of joy and emptiness, and so sixteen levels of realization; these are subsumed within the former ones.

Other Traditions [3]

In conjunction with spiritual instructions, there are other methods of classifying the paths and levels, whose distinct features should be learned from their individual sources.

*The foregoing constitutes the second part
concerning the paths and levels in the fruition-based Vajrayāna.*

Part 3. Conduct: The Process of Enhancement

Conduct in the Three Yānas [I]

In general terms, conduct (as an auxiliary aspect of the spiritual path) is said to be conduct free of the passions on the lower level, that of the transcendent perfections in the greater context, and that of desire and passion for those inspired by a profound approach.

Conduct in the Anuttara Tantras [II]

Kinds of Conduct [A]

Bases of Analysis [1]

If the latter (all that is explained in the tantras) is summarized, . . .

Essence [2]

. . . it is of three kinds: elaborate, unelaborate, and extremely unelaborate.

To analyze it by environment, it pertains to households, charnel grounds, and sacred realms.

As for the mode, there is the conduct of eliminating duality, of complete nobility, and of total victory.

Detailed Treatment [B]

Ordinary Conduct [1]

Summary [a]

In emphasizing tantras of skillful means, there are two distinct modes: that of intent and involvement, and that of reliance and training.

Extensive Explanation [b]

Intent and Involvement [i]

For a beginning practitioner, activities such as those between practice sessions constitute the guidelines for training in intent and involvement. . . .

Reliance and Training [ii]

... Single, twofold, or threefold modes:

by relying on and training in these, one engages in conduct through alternation or combination.

Sense pleasures are meditated to be the vajra goddesses, arousing delight in the mind.

Between practice sessions, incorporate the sense faculties and their objects into one's path; this is the cause for the spiritual deportment of pure awareness.

Spiritual Deportment of Pure Awareness [2]

Essence [a]

Attributes, fellow practitioners, and song, dance, and other creative activities may be extensive or play a minor role, or one may rely solely on meditative absorption.

In essence, this is a developmental process from an elaborate mode to others.

The Individual [b]

The distinctions concerning one's involvement in conduct include what one's mind delights in, and one's age, intelligence, material possessions, and degree of desire.

Subcategories [c]

Moreover, these three modes of conduct become nine in light of three contexts:

activities, meditation and contemplation, and occasion.

The mother tantras emphasize the spiritual deportment of pure awareness.

Stages [d]**Essence [i]**

In general, the essence of this lies in the distinctive activities of the three avenues,
bringing enhancement through stable meditative absorption.

Occasion [ii]

The occasion is when, through the stage of development, one's chosen deity grants permission,
one is not overwhelmed by harmful events, one's meditative stability is not shaken by circumstances,
one is equally indifferent to the eight mundane values, and sense pleasures are experienced as supports.

This constitutes meditative warmth of the lower degree of the stage of completion.

It brings the intermediate degree, with its accomplishment of the gazes of annihilation, and the highest degree,
with that of the gazes of nurturing and the rest, and so is endowed with unlimited potential.

There are five specific occasions: to gain states of ordinary attainment due to one's mastery of timeless awareness;
to gain the ultimate state of a master of awareness, which is the fourth yoga of the stage of completion;
to gain the enlightened embodiment that comes with the attainment of meditative warmth; and to experience the state of primordial unity with more training or no more training. There are two cases involving necessity.

Purpose [iii]

The purpose is that of ensuring complete accomplishment of the two kinds of spiritual attainment
and of causing those attainments to flourish and swiftly be brought to consummation.

Due to the specific variables concerning consorts (such as essence and number),
one's realization of the unity of supreme bliss and emptiness occurs in specific ways.

Process [iv]

As for the way in which one engages in conduct, that of avadhūti is predominantly unelaborate,
that of complete nobility is balanced, and that of total victory is primarily elaborate.
The first two apply to the path of linkage and the latter to the path of the spiritually advanced,
but all three can be found in both ordinary individuals and spiritually advanced beings.

Environment [aa]

The environments for engaging in conduct are distinct locations, major sacred sites, and similar places.
In the conduct of the father tantras, one does not roam through such environments.

Companions [bb]

As for companions, practitioners of the stage of completion are unbiased,
while practitioners of the stage of development ascertain that these are of like type,
while for both stages there are those whose attainment comes from training and others.

Motivation [cc]

The attitude has five points: the two kinds of benefit, absence of fixation, loving-kindness, and generosity.

Frame of Reference [dd]

The frame of reference for practitioners of the stage of development is deity yoga,
while for practitioners of the stage of completion, it is integrated with one's awareness of utter lucidity, the unity of bliss and emptiness.

Attributes [ee]

One wears the attributes of the deity, . . .

Activities [ff]

. . . seeks permission, and performs prostrations and so forth.

Support [gg]

One appreciates the equal taste of good and bad in a nonconceptual frame of mind.

Training [hh]

The guidelines of training are: not to show disrespect, not to express anger, not to transgress, and other such admonitions;
to engage in conduct for beginning practitioners and in any situation whatsoever without fear;
to give up rituals, certainty, and the like; and to acquire the means of gaining stability.
Not performing prostrations and so forth, one gains great stability.

Benefits and Qualities [ii]

The qualities are limitless. . . .

How One Engages in Conduct [jj]

. . . Initially, one engages in conduct in secret.
With stability comes that of avadhūti, which is carried out secretly in disguise;

with the intermediate degree of meditative warmth, that of complete nobility (that is, the conduct of engaging fully in the world); and with the greater degree of warmth, that of total victory in all ways.

Conduct in the Gaṇacakra Ritual [e]

Elaborate Mode [i]

In particular, elaborate conduct in gaṇacakras involves the practice of accomplishment concerning the *maṇḍala*.

Through symbolic song and dance, one partakes of the inner fire ritual and engages in the union of equipoise, embracing the pleasures of the senses.

In the Cakrasaṃvara tradition, one invokes the three kinds of heralds.

Practice of the Maṇḍala [aa]

Enjoyment of Sense Pleasures [bb]

The Cakrasaṃvara Tradition: Gatherings of Heralds [cc]

Unelaborate Mode [ii]

The unelaborate mode is to rely on any appropriate part of the foregoing.

There is even a practice to bind *yakṣa* and *yakṣī* spirits to one's service.

Extremely Unelaborate Mode [iii]

The extremely unelaborate mode is that of the *bhusuku*, who does away with distraction

and relies on the jñānamudrā consort and the utterly lucid state of sleep.

There are two actual kinds and three parallel kinds. . . .

Related Issues [f]

Degrees of Acumen [i]

. . . For the elaborate mode and the rest,

there are degrees of acumen (duller, middling, and keener) that are progressively swifter.

Distinctive Features of Empowerment [ii]

In connection with empowerment, the expedient cause is a factor contributing to manifest enlightenment.

Intent of the Kālacakra Tantra [iii]

In the Kālacakra cycle, there is discussion of conduct of the four vajras, the six family types, and the six transcendent perfections.

Conduct of the Four Vajras [aa]

Conduct of the Six Families [bb]

Conduct of the Six Transcendent Perfections [cc]

Summary [iv]

All modes are subsumed within the two kinds of conduct, that of the stages of development and completion.

Wrathful Activity [g]

As for the trenchant activity of wrath, an auxiliary function of conduct, this is not needed by someone immersed in the stages of development and completion;

but for those engaged in mantra or the stage of completion, there are situations when it is useful, just as there are times that a horse is useful when an elephant is not.

Traditions of Past Masters [C]

According to the majority of past masters, the situation of a beginner is one of observing samaya and vows and avoiding objectionable actions,

striving on the path with the conduct of total nobility. Through this one gains warmth

in the meditative equipoise of the stage of completion. The secret conduct practiced in concealment

then involves meat, alcohol, and consorts. When stability is gained in both meditative equipoise and postmeditation,

in the company of one's consort, one adopts the attributes of a yogic practitioner and overtly engages in conduct in group practice; this is known as the spiritual deportment of pure awareness.

Once one has gained sublime capability and is free of the bonds of conditioned existence, there is truly total victory, for one is free of apprehension, tramples on counterproductive circumstances, and overwhelms the three states of conditioned existence. Conduct is explained as being in order to ensure benefit for others who are to be guided. All its modes lead one to the most sublime spiritual attainments.

*The foregoing constitutes the third part
concerning an analysis of conduct, the process of enhancement
that is an auxiliary aspect of the spiritual path.*

Part 4. The Paths and Levels in the Three Yogas

The Outer and Inner Levels of Significance [I]

The Paths [A]

The Early Translation School's tradition of explaining the correspondence between outer and inner levels is, generally speaking, as follows:

the cakra at the navel corresponds to the path of accumulation, that at the heart to the four phases of the path of linkage, that at the throat to the path of seeing, and that at the crown of the head to the path of meditation.

In this interpretation, when the unity of subtle energy and mind associated with these four centers has become adaptable, the qualities associated with these four paths arise in succession.

The Levels [B]

Within the central channel are twenty-one blockages of the lateral channels.

With adaptability in the *nirmāṇacakra*, the first pair are freed, and so on, as these blockages are freed in pairs and one gains each of the ten levels. Finally, the sublime pinnacle level above the crown of the head is attained.

The Paths and Levels of Mahāyoga [II]

Entering the Path of Mahāyoga [A]

In particular, the root of the yogas is the tradition of the *Web of Magical Display*.

Through the three kinds of sublime intelligence, one arouses five aspects of bodhicitta: directed resolve, aspiration, application, abiding, and consummation. On the direct path that is far superior to four other approaches, with the resolve to gain release that they entail, . . .

The Path of Sublime Intelligence [1]

The Path of Skillful Means [2]

Traversing the Path of Mahāyoga [B]

The Path of Accumulation [1]

... one traverses the path of accumulation through the fourfold process that addresses both corruptibility and regression.

The Path of Application [2]

In the group practice of the gaṇacakra ritual, with corruptibility but not the possibility for regression, the results of the path of linkage are the three paths of seeing nonduality, meditation, and consummation and the four levels of a master of awareness.

The Path of Seeing [3]

Masters of Awareness Still Subject to the Complete Maturation of Karma [a]

Although one has realization of the actual nature of phenomena on the path of seeing, the residual traces of one's physical body have not been refined away, so one has the three qualities of someone still subject to the complete maturation of karma.

One's positive qualities are augmented, one gains mastery of the four kinds of enlightened activities, and one gains deeper levels of insight and other qualities, so that one can benefit beings throughout a world system.

Masters of Awareness with Power over Longevity [b]

There is accomplishment through alchemical means, the descent and holding of *bindu* through subtle energy, but the indestructible vajrakāya, in which corruptibility is finished with, is far superior to these.

With power over longevity through completing the path, omnipresent distortions are refined away, and due to the four kinds of spiritual miracles, the six levels of deeper discernment,

and the twenty-five aspects of sense consciousness, one benefits beings in a three-thousandfold universe.

The Path of Meditation [4]

On the path of meditation, masters of mahāmudrā have illusory forms of timeless awareness.

Beginning with the level of The Stainless One, and up to the pathway of complete freedom on the tenth level,

they are subsumed within five families of masters of awareness: vajra, cakṛa, ratna,

padma, and karma. Indwelling distortions are refined away,

and enlightened activities are carried out in whatever way necessary to guide beings,

on a scale equal to that of a sambhogakāya pure realm.

The Path of Consummation [5]

On the path of consummation, for masters of spontaneously present awareness, regents of the sixth family,

the vajralike state refines away distortions of the three successive steps of subtle experience.

Their deeds, emanations, and sublime intelligence are somewhat like those of victorious ones.

Parallels and Degrees of Progress [6]

There are parallels to the ordinary levels of The Utterly Joyful One, The Immutable One, and The Cloud of Dharma,

but although the degrees of progress are equivalent, there is superiority of intent and conduct.

Conduct in Mahāyoga [C]

Meditative equipoise is the one-pointed meditative stability specific to a level,

while postmeditation involves three kinds of conduct: the pursuit of virtue like that of a youth;

like that of a madman; and like that of a ruler holding the throne.
Decisiveness comes through the paths of skillful means and freedom
and eight aspects of conduct.

The Paths and Levels of Anuyoga [III]

Acumen and Anuyoga Practice [A]

In Anu, for the highest level of mind, the paths and levels are traversed
in one fell swoop;
the intermediate and lesser levels are either traversed in succession or in
a nonlinear way, moreover, . . .

Five Yogic Phases [B]

The Path of Accumulation [1]

. . . so two levels, that of unpredictable change and that of the basis of
reliance,
constitute the path of accumulation (the directing of will), in which the
deity's embodiment is an expression of one's dedicated intent.
This ensures the more common accomplishments, such as deeper levels
of insight and levels of deeper discernment.

The Path of Linkage [2]

The levels of the major refining process, the continuity, and the basis of
merit
constitute the path of linkage (the affirmation of one's birthright), in
which the embodiment of the deity's form is an expression of the
unity of subtle energy and mind.

The Path of Seeing [3]

Due to the expedient cause, changeable bliss is done away with, and all
that is corruptible comes to an end.
Improvement constitutes the path of seeing, in which the embodiment
of the deity is an expression of the unity of bliss and emptiness.

The Path of Meditation [4]

The framework that ushers in the fruition constitutes the path of meditation, the receiving of the supreme transmission.

The embodiment of the deity is an expression of the uninterrupted state of primordial unity that still involves training.

The Path of Consummation [5]

Three levels—abiding without change, permeation, and the universal range of perfection—constitute the path of consummation, the perfecting of supreme dynamic energy. Through the pathway without obstacles

that lies at the very threshold of enlightenment, the empowerment of supreme passion

refines away subtle distortions, bringing the experience of primordial unity that requires no more training.

The Paths and Levels of Atiyoga [IV]

Empowerment in Atiyoga [A]

Path and Empowerment [1]

The paths and levels of Ati transcend developmental effort.

Nonetheless, within the four stages of empowerment found in the extraordinary secret cycles,

some sixteen subdivisions of the aspects of manifest realization are differentiated.

The same is true for the levels of dedicated interest, involvement, transformation, and decisiveness.

Together these are thirty-two factors. Timeless awareness is analyzed into four aspects of abiding,

awakening, attainment, and arising, giving sixty-four factors that contribute

to the perfection of the sublime level of Vajradhara.

Four Levels of Masters of Awareness [2]

Immersion in genuine being, supreme immersion, analysis, and realization:

each is further analyzed into four subdivisions, giving sixteen levels of masters of awareness.

These are causal levels, attained through recollection of the four stages of empowerment.

Four Visions of Atiyoga [B]

Sixteen Visions of Atiyoga [1]

The four visions each involve stages of manifestation, increase, attainment, and complete attainment, so the levels of the visions associated with the fruition are sixteen measures in one's experience of timeless awareness.

Sixteen Levels of Atiyoga [2]

Perception of truth, recognition, familiarity, luminous vision, timeless awareness, enlightened form in full evidence, consummation, unwavering state, perfection of qualities, tranquil state, group formations, nonattachment, circles, abiding vision, gaining of certainty, and the level of original purity:

on that level there is nothing higher than tranquil timeless awareness. Beginning with the level of The Utterly Joyful One, up to that of Total Illumination, The Lotus-Bearing One,

The Circles of Letters, Meditative Absorption, The Vajra Holder, and Unsurpassable Timeless Awareness,

these levels are all approached in a similar manner, but because they are visions

of a single state of utter lucidity, they are not the ten ordinary levels.

Qualities in Atiyoga [C]

Nevertheless, with the expansion of pathways of light in the central channel,

once the first two blockages in the subtle channels dissolve into light, one experiences such qualities as the "twelve hundredfold."

With this enhancement, manifest aspects of realization arise effortlessly as awareness's own manifestations.

Conduct in Atiyoga [D]

Conduct as ongoing immersion in genuine being can be at the beginning stage, in delineating the gap, and in pursuing the path of spiritual deportment. Of the latter's twenty-one aspects, one engages primarily in seven, such as that like a bee's, and gains mastery of all one perceives.

Summary [V]

According to individual spiritual instructions, the ways in which the paths and levels are traversed are beyond enumerating; the fundamentals are summarized here.

*The foregoing constitutes the fourth part
concerning a detailed treatment of the paths and levels
in the three yogas of the Early Translation School's approach.*

*This concludes the ninth book,
an analysis of the paths and levels to be traversed,
from The Encompassing of All Knowledge,
also entitled The Precious Treasury of Sublime Teachings:
The Compendium of the Methods of All Spiritual Approaches
and A Treatise That Thoroughly Presents the Three Higher Trainings.*

AN ANALYSIS OF THE SPIRITUAL PATHS AND LEVELS TO BE TRAVERSED

On the basis of one's having practiced both the common and distinctive stages of meditation,²⁶ actual states of realization that are associated with the spiritual paths and levels occur progressively in one's experience. As well, there are modes of conduct involved that enhance this process, causing the qualities related to these states of realization to develop where they have not yet developed and to become stable once they have developed. Since one needs to be aware of these states and qualities, Book 9 analyzes the paths and levels to be traversed. This book has four parts, which provide detailed treatments of the paths and levels in the cause-based dialectical approach; the paths and levels in the fruition-based Vajrayāna; the process of enhancement, which is an auxiliary aspect of the spiritual path; and the paths and levels in the "three yogas" of the Early Translation School's approach.

PART 1. THE PATHS AND LEVELS IN THE CAUSE-BASED DIALECTICAL APPROACH

- I. The Paths of the Dialectical Approach
 - A. Essential Quality of a Spiritual Path
 - B. Analytical Enumeration of the Paths
 - C. Derivation of the Term
 - D. Distinction between Actuality and Imputation
 - E. Extensive Explanation of the Paths
 - 1. The Path of Accumulation
 - a. Characteristics
 - b. Basis
 - c. Analysis
 - d. Nature
 - e. Distinctive Processes
 - f. Qualities
 - g. Function
 - h. Derivation of the Term
 - 2. The Path of Linkage
 - a. Characteristics
 - b. Basis
 - c. Analysis
 - i. Meditative Warmth
 - ii. Peak Experience
 - iii. Patient Acceptance
 - iv. Highest Mundane Experience
 - d. Nature
 - e. Distinctive Processes

f. Qualities

g. Function

h. Derivation of the Terms

3. The Path of Seeing

a. Characteristics

b. Basis

c. Analysis

d. Nature

i. Elimination on the Path of Seeing

aa. Characteristics of the Factors to Be Eliminated

bb. Detailed Analysis of the Factors to Be Eliminated

cc. How These Factors Are Eliminated

ii. The Onset of the Path of Seeing

e. Distinctive Processes

f. Qualities

g. Function

h. Derivation of the Term

4. The Path of Meditation

a. Characteristics

b. Basis

c. Analysis

d. Nature

i. Elimination on the Path of Meditation

ii. The Development of the Path of Meditation

e. Distinctive Processes

f. Qualities

g. Function

h. Derivation of the Term

5. The Path of Consummation

a. Characteristics

b. Basis

c. Analysis

d. Nature

e. Distinctive Processes

f. Qualities

g. Function

h. Derivation of the Term

II. The Levels of the Dialectical Approach

A. Two Kinds of Levels

1. Overview
2. Extensive Explanation
 - a. The Levels of Freedom from Attachment
 - b. The Levels Associated with Buddhahood

B. Distinctions between These Levels

C. Extensive Explanation of the Levels Associated with Buddhahood

1. Essence
2. Basis of Characteristics
3. Derivation of the Term
4. Analysis
5. Distinctive Features
 - a. Names and Their Derivation
 - b. Thorough Training and Progress
 - c. Spiritual Practice and Individual Practitioner
 - d. The Three Higher Trainings and Components of Practice
 - e. Purity, Elimination, and Realization
 - f. Specific Qualities and States of Rebirth
6. Definitive Rationale for Ten Spiritual Levels

This first part involves two detailed treatments: the nature of the spiritual paths in this approach and that of the spiritual levels.

The Paths of the Dialectical Approach [I]

The treatment of the paths is fivefold: the essential quality of a spiritual path; an analytical enumeration of these paths; the derivation of the term “path”; the distinction between an actual and a conceptually imputed path; and an extensive explanation of the five individual paths of this approach.

Essential Quality of a Spiritual Path [A]

A spiritual path is, in essence, a passage that allows one to traverse to more sublime states.

A spiritual path to be traversed constitutes, in essence, a process that allows one to traverse to more sublime states, whether states within this world or transcendent states. As for what characterizes a spiritual path, some commentators are of the opinion that it constitutes “the virtue that serves as the cause of liberation” or “the capacity to remove any factors that are to be eliminated.” But these characterizations are not accurate because these they also apply to spiritual levels and antidotal techniques, which would mean that the latter were the equivalent of paths. Others hold that an aspect of a spiritual path is the action of proceeding, but this also is not an accurate characterization because a path is likened to a passage that allows one to proceed, [4.103.b] whereas the one performing the action of proceeding is actually some individual.

Analytical Enumeration of the Paths [B]

Paths can be analyzed as the three approaches, as corruptible or incorruptible, and so forth;
although there are many such analyses, the most common format accepted by everyone is that of five paths.

Generally speaking, there are countless ways to analyze spiritual paths. There are three paths, in the sense of the three spiritual approaches.²⁷ There are various analyses that distinguish two kinds of paths, such as those leading either to higher states of rebirth or to liberation; those leading to “states of edification” or to “definitive excellence”;²⁸ those that are of this world or those that are transcendent; and those that are corruptible vis-à-vis those that are incorruptible.²⁹ The words “and so forth” in the foregoing source verses refer implicitly to alternative analyses, such as:

- ▶ the four paths of linkage and so forth³⁰
- ▶ four paths classified on the basis of being swift or slow, difficulty or easy
- ▶ two paths, one still requiring training and one of no more training being necessary³¹
- ▶ or the two paths of meditative equipoise and postmeditation awareness.

Although there are many such ways of analyzing spiritual paths depending on context, the common format accepted by all is that of what

is renowned as the “five paths”: those of accumulation, linkage, seeing, meditation, and no more training.

Derivation of the Term [C]

As for the derivation of the term, it is a “path” because it is the basis of what is to be traversed.

The Sanskrit *pathi*,³² formed from the verb stem *panth*, “to go,” is the term for “path.” The derivation of the term is as follows: It is called a “path” because it serves as a passage that is to be traversed or the basis of what is to be traversed. It is “what is to be traversed” because it is that which is to be traversed by individuals who embark on this path. According to the sūtra the *Compendium*:

It is that which, when all beings participate in it, allows them to cross over to nirvāṇa.³³

As this states, to participate in it (which is to say, to rely on it) allows one to go to nirvāṇa, and so it is also referred to as an “approach,” from the standpoint of it resembling a vehicle or mount.

Distinction between Actuality and Imputation [D]

For śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, the path (involving progress) is actual, while the fruition is nominally imputed.

For the Mahāyāna, the path is imputed, while the fruition (the consummation of that progress) is actual; direct realization is actual, while its preparatory paths are imputed.

For śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, the spiritual path is what is truly authentic because it involves progress to higher states, [4.104.a] while the fruition is nominally imputed.³⁴ For those of the Mahāyāna, the path is imputed, while the fruition is truly authentic because it constitutes the consummate degree of elimination and realization. In addition, according to the master Jñānamitra:

Given that the paths of accumulation and linkage still pertain to this world, they do not constitute the Truth of the Path³⁵ but rather are auxiliary components of the path because they cause it to come about.³⁶

In accord with this quotation, Sherab Bar of Dri³⁷ and others state that because the two paths of accumulation and linkage involve conceptual consciousness (and so are corruptible), they do not constitute the actual path.

Nevertheless, this is a case of the term for the result being applicable to the cause. If we adopt this interpretation, there is a purpose in referring to the two paths of accumulation and linkage as conceptually based components of the path because they prepare one for the actual state of direct realization, that of the path of seeing. The *Amassing of the Rare and Sublime* uses the analogy of fire being produced by rubbing two sticks together to illustrate that even though these two are conceptually based paths, nonconceptual awareness can come about through a legitimate conceptual process. As well, these paths are analogous to seeds; thus, even though they are explained as being corruptible, to the extent that the basis of all ordinary experience³⁸ involved with these paths is relevant to the whole path, there is an incorruptible element, and the authentic path comes about due to these paths.

Extensive Explanation of the Paths [E]

There are five paths: those of accumulation, linkage, seeing, meditation, and consummation.³⁹

The Path of Accumulation [1]

The explanation of the path of accumulation is in eight topics: a presentation of its characteristics; an identification of the basis being characterized; a detailed analysis; a definitive statement about its nature; its distinctive processes of elimination and realization; a description of its qualities; a statement about what its function is; and a discussion of the derivation of the term.

Characteristics [a]

The path of accumulation is composed of positive factors that anticipate liberation.

The path of accumulation in essence—or as the basis of certain characteristics—is composed of positive factors that anticipate liberation (that is, anything on the basis of which one can progress toward nirvāṇa).

Basis [b]

The basis being characterized is one of striving at hearing teachings, meditating, and so forth. [4.104.b]

The basis of what is characterized as this path constitutes the regimen that causes one's spiritual experience to mature. This consists of striving at three activities (those of hearing teachings, contemplating them, and meditating on them), which begin with the initial arousal of bodhicitta and continue up to one's experience of the degree of timeless awareness associated with the phase of meditative warmth.⁴⁰

Analysis [c]

Cultivation of the applications of mindfulness, aspects of correct renunciation,

and bases of supernormal powers—this path has three degrees (that is, initial, intermediate, and final).

Alternatively, this path is analyzed into four stages, that of the beginner and so forth.

The cultivation of the four applications of mindfulness⁴¹ constitutes the initial degree of the path of accumulation, at which point it is uncertain whether one will eventually embark on the path of linkage. The cultivation of the four aspects of correct renunciation⁴² constitutes the intermediate degree of the path of accumulation, at which point it is certain that one will eventually embark on the path of linkage. When one is cultivating the four bases of supernormal powers,⁴³ this constitutes the final

degree of the path of accumulation, at which point it is certain that one will experience the meditative warmth of the path of linkage. Thus, there are these three degrees: initial, intermediate, and final. Alternatively, there is an analysis of this path into four stages: the beginner's stage, the stage of faith, the anticipation of liberation, and the "accomplishment of armor."⁴⁴

Nature [d]

There are three distinctive features: onset, dependence, and what one focuses on.

These three features concern the following: those whose experience serves as the basis for the onset of this path, the levels of attainment on which it is dependent, and the context on which one focuses.

As for the first of these, it is said that the path of accumulation can be experienced only by men and women of three continents,⁴⁵ and that it cannot be experienced by other beings, including those who are asexual or hermaphroditic.⁴⁶

As for the second feature, one's efforts to engage in spiritual practice on a regular basis are dependent on the six levels of meditative stability⁴⁷ or the one-pointed absorption of the realm of desire;⁴⁸ all other positive factors, which contribute to an ordinary individual's discipline, are dependent on the level of the realm of desire.⁴⁹

As for the third feature, one's discipline as an ordinary individual focuses on moral choices concerning physical and verbal actions; one's efforts to engage in spiritual practice on a regular basis focus on techniques for completely refining one's behavior patterns (such as concentrating on the unattractive features of something),⁵⁰ or on the body and other topics for the applications of mindfulness. All other contributory positive factors [4.105.a] focus on the words and meanings found in the Buddha's excellent teachings.

Distinctive Processes [e]

More overt factors are eliminated, and the lack of identity is realized in a theoretical way.

The extremely overt factors to be eliminated (that is, those that create suffering in saṃsāra) are removed through antidotes that involve confrontation.⁵¹ The two implications of the lack of identity⁵² are realized in a theoretical way through the three kinds of sublime intelligence.⁵³

Qualities [f]

On the basis of spiritual potential, attitude, and conduct, one is endowed with five qualities.

One gains the ongoing qualities of deeper levels of insight, levels of deeper discernment, and meditative absorption.

With what distinctive qualities are bodhisattvas⁵⁴ on the path of accumulation endowed? Their spiritual potential for the Mahāyāna has awakened; they have aroused the two kinds of bodhicitta, the awakening attitude;⁵⁵ and their conduct is that of training in the six transcendent perfections. With these as a basis, they are endowed with five qualities: they rely on the discipline that pertains to ordinary individuals; they exercise control over their senses; they eat in moderation; they do not sleep during the late evening and early morning but devote themselves to spiritual practice; and they take real delight in maintaining ongoing alertness of mind.

As for the first of these qualities, they do not, of course, lack the discipline of meditative stability or ordination; rather they rely on one of the seven kinds of Mahāyāna ordination for individual liberation, whichever is appropriate.⁵⁶

As for the second quality, these bodhisattvas exercise control over their senses by applying mindfulness that is both respectful and continuous, functioning in a powerful way. With this as their general approach, they engage in conduct that emphasizes the profundity of the teachings and the principle of sublime intelligence, by imbuing all that they do with an appreciation of the transcendent perfection of sublime intelligence. They also engage in conduct that emphasizes the vast extent of the teachings and the principle of skillful means, by acting for the sake of others and formulating aspirations to engage in the completely refined conduct of the bodhisattva ideal.

As for the third quality, they partake of food and other necessities that have been offered to them by people with faith and, knowing which foods

are allowed or proscribed, eat a moderate amount. They eat with the intention of nourishing the organisms that live in their bodies [4.105.b] and of sustaining their bodies as supports for spiritual practice.

As for the fourth quality, at the start and finish of their daily sessions they apply mindfulness to avoid becoming caught up in time-consuming activities and instead meditate on the unattractive features of something, cultivate the immeasurable attitudes,⁵⁷ and so forth. That is to say, they exert themselves in spiritual practice that completely refines away obscurations.⁵⁸

As for the fifth quality, they ensure that they never lack the vigilance of an alert mind in all situations calling for such moral choices as what to accept or reject in their physical, verbal, or mental actions. They take delight in maintaining this alertness, in order to engage in behavior that is appropriate and avoid what is inappropriate.

In addition, they gain other qualities that pertain to the path of accumulation (such as the five deeper levels of insight⁵⁹ and five levels of deeper discernment⁶⁰) and attain an ongoing state of meditative absorption, which is the fruition that constitutes the distinctive consummation of this path. In this regard, without straying from this absorption they gain entrance to a vast range of buddha realms throughout the ten directions and hear teachings of the sacred dharma from the lips of a vast array of buddhas. As the *Ornament of the Sūtras* states:

At that point, through the ongoing flow of spirituality,
in the presence of buddhas one gains calm abiding
and a spacious experience of timeless awareness,
and so receives very extensive spiritual advice.⁶¹

Function [g]

In these degrees (initial, intermediate, and final) the Four Truths and two levels of truth are mentally embraced, which causes one to turn away from the four kinds of erroneous opinions and the conception of things as real; counterproductive factors are eliminated, while positive qualities are aroused and increased; the eight thought patterns are eliminated, and meditative absorption is brought to a one-pointed focus.

Let me explain the respective functions of the three degrees of that path: the initial, intermediate, and final degrees.

In the initial degree of the path of accumulation, for those following the śrāvaka approach the function of the four applications of mindfulness is to cause the mind to embrace the Four Truths of noble ones⁶² and turn away from the four kinds of erroneous opinions.⁶³ For those following the Mahāyāna, the function of these applications is to cause the mind to embrace the two levels of truth⁶⁴ and turn away from the limitless ways in which things are naïvely taken to be real.

In the intermediate degree, the function of the first two of the four aspects of correct renunciation [4.106.a] is to eliminate counterproductive factors, while the function of the latter two aspects is to arouse positive factors and cause these to increase.

In the final degree, the function of the four bases of supernormal powers is to eliminate the eight kinds of erroneous and mundane thought patterns⁶⁵ (such as thoughts of desire) and to give one control over one-pointed meditative absorption.

Derivation of the Term [h]

As for the derivation of the term, this path involves the
accumulation of positive factors to make one a suitable
recipient;

it is also the path that anticipates liberation, that of faith, and that
of direct confrontation.

As for the derivation or meaning of the term, this is called the “path of accumulation” because it is the path on which one accumulates positive factors on a vast scale, in order for one to be made a suitable recipient for realization such as that of meditative warmth⁶⁶ to awaken in one. It is also referred to as:⁶⁷

- ▶ the “positive foundation that anticipates liberation” because it causes one to think in ways that anticipate the liberation of nirvāṇa;
- ▶ the “level of faith” because it strengthens one’s devotion toward the Three Jewels and one’s envisioning of emptiness; and
- ▶ the “antidote involving direct confrontation” because for those who follow the śrāvaka approach it involves the view that the mind-body aggregates (which perpetuate saṃsāra) are as disadvantageous as

some kind of skin disease, while for those who follow the Mahāyāna approach it involves the view that these aggregates have no independent nature.

The Path of Linkage [2]

The explanation of the path of linkage is also in eight topics: a presentation of its characteristics; an identification of the basis being characterized; a detailed analysis; a definitive statement about its nature; its distinctive processes of elimination and realization; a description of its qualities; a statement about what its function is; and a demonstration of the derivation of the terms.

Characteristics [a]

The path of linkage provides the context for the direct realization of what is ultimate.

The path of linkage, in essence, constitutes that which is the passage to complete freedom. It is made up of situations in which one directly realizes what is truly meaningful.⁶⁸

Basis [b]

It is the sublime intelligence that derives from meditation in a mundane framework.

The basis of what is characterized as this path constitutes the antidote that involves the elimination of negative factors,⁶⁹ that is, the sublime intelligence that derives from mundane meditation, from the onset of meditative warmth up to the point just prior to the onset of the path of seeing. [4.106.b]

Analysis [c]

While there are many ways to analyze this path (such as the natural progression of dedicated intent),

once timeless awareness is experienced as the onset of meditative warmth, with the stirring of fundamentally positive factors, one gains patient acceptance of the profound nature of phenomena and the highest mundane experience.

These four phases involve the cultivation of five governing powers and five strengths, one group for each pair of phases.

As for an analysis of this path, it can be analyzed according to the natural progression involved, into such divisions as the “level of engagement with dedicated intent,”⁷⁰ the “corruptible path of meditation,”⁷¹ the “phases that anticipate the decisive breakthrough,” and the “accomplishment that brings engagement.”⁷²

Concerning the distinction between the paths of accumulation and linkage, there is an aspect of the path of linkage that also pertains to that of accumulation, and an aspect that pertains to the path of linkage but not to that of accumulation. The first aspect is the continuity of experience gained on the path of accumulation, which is still present on the path of linkage. The latter aspect is that which “links” one to the Four Truths (or the two implications of the lack of identity,⁷³ as the case may be), which therefore pertains to linkage but is not the actual path of accumulation, and so does not pertain to that path.

If we analyze it into lesser and greater degrees, the path of linkage can be divided into three degrees: initial, intermediate, and final. Of these, with the initial degree it is uncertain whether one will eventually experience the path of seeing; with the intermediate degree, there is certainty that one will; and with the final degree, it is certain that one will experience the path of seeing in this lifetime.

While there are many ways to analyze this path, the most well-known of these is that of analyzing the path on the basis of how realization occurs:

(1) In this regard, there is the phase of meditative warmth.⁷⁴ Just as there is warmth when two sticks are rubbed together, as a foreshadowing of the fire that will come about, so there comes a foreshadowing that one will experience the path of seeing (that is, nonconceptual timeless awareness), which is comparable to the fire in the analogy.

(2) Then there is the phase of the peak experience, when the fundamentally positive factors that are still volatile⁷⁵ reach their climax (that is, their highest or most sublime degree).⁷⁶ An equivalent Sanskrit term for “peak experience” is *mūrti*,⁷⁷ which can be translated as “a momentary

occurrence,” and so this is also referred to as the peak (in the sense of transitory) experience because it does not last for long.

(3) Next, one gains the phase of a patient acceptance of the profound nature of phenomena, an acceptance that parallels the path of seeing the truth in an unwavering manner. This constitutes patient acceptance in the sense that one is not daunted by emptiness.⁷⁸

(4) The phase of the highest mundane experience is so called because it constitutes the most sublime experience within the context of this world, for it is capable of ushering in the paths of the spiritually advanced beings⁷⁹ (although it is not the congruent cause⁸⁰ of these paths).⁸¹ [4.107.a] It serves as the governing condition⁸² for the path of seeing, which is incorruptible. The *Ornament of Manifest Realization* states:

... involving lower, intermediate, and highest degrees ...⁸³

Thus, there are three degrees to all of the above phases,⁸⁴ so that some Mahāyāna commentators consider the path of linkage to be divided into a total of twelve degrees. This model is as follows:

Meditative Warmth [i]

Using one's individual self-knowing timeless awareness, one meditates by focusing on the topics of the Four Truths.⁸⁵ This brings about the realization that objects that are reified externally have no independent nature, being nothing more than mere descriptions imposed by the inner perceiving mind. The attainment of a lesser degree of mental clarity concerning this realization involves both meditative absorption (that is, calm abiding) and sublime intelligence (that is, deeper insight), as well as their corresponding states of mind and mental events. Three degrees of meditative warmth (lesser, intermediate, and greater) are assigned on the basis of whether this experience of clarity (concerning emptiness or the absence of independent nature) is intermittent, fairly predominant, or even more prevalent and evident. The timeless awareness associated with meditative warmth is sometimes referred to as being “aroused on the lesser path of seeing”⁸⁶ since to a slight extent one sees something meaningful that one has not seen before. Nevertheless, in comparison to the peak experience and other phases, in this phase one is experiencing the lowest level of this clarity concerning emptiness or the absence of independent nature.

Peak Experience [ii]

One exerts oneself as before with constant diligence, so that the foregoing perception (that is, the realization that reified objects have no independent nature) increases and develops beyond the previous phase, leading to the meditative absorption and sublime intelligence associated with the attainment of the intermediate level of this experience of clarity, together with the corresponding accompanying factors. There are three degrees of this phase (lesser, intermediate, and greater) on the basis of whether the realization that things lack any independent nature is clearly recalled only intermittently during the dream state, or fairly predominantly, or even more frequently.

Patient Acceptance [iii]

One continues to meditate as before, so that all that appears as meaningful objects in one's perception manifests solely as expressions of mind. One attains this experience of clarity to a great degree, having done away with distractions caused by one's reifying objects, and also gains the lesser degree of another experience of clarity (the realization that even the subjective perceiving mind is empty and lacks any independent nature), with its attendant meditative absorption and sublime intelligence, [4.107.b] together with their corresponding factors. There are three degrees of this phase (lesser, intermediate, and greater) due to there being the three alternatives of one's being undaunted by emptiness occasionally, for the most part, or at all times.

Highest Mundane Experience [iv]

One continues to meditate as before, coming to the realization that the subjective perceiving mind has no independent nature, so that the path of seeing ensues immediately in the wake of this realization. With respect to the mundane path,⁸⁷ one has attained the greatest degree of the experience of clarity concerning the fact that the perceiving mind has no independent nature, while with respect to the transcendent path⁸⁸ one has attained the middling degree of the experience of suchness; these entail meditative absorption and sublime intelligence, together with their corresponding factors. There are three degrees of this phase (lesser, intermediate, and

greater) due to this state of clarity (that is, the experience that the subjective perceiving mind has no independent nature) being realized to a lesser, a middling, or an excellent degree.

The higher and lower schools of the Abhidharma⁸⁹ are in accord in that they both classify the phase of patient acceptance into three degrees (lesser, intermediate, and greater) but not the other phases that anticipate the decisive breakthrough.⁹⁰ As for the essential mode of consciousness experienced during these phases, it is conceptual when compared to the nonconceptual timeless awareness of the path of seeing but can be seen as a nonconceptual mode of direct perception when compared to ordinary consciousness (which ascertains words and meanings); for the former is explained as involving the attainment of an experience of clarity concerning that fact that reified objects have no independent nature).⁹¹

During these four phases, one cultivates in meditation the five governing powers⁹² and the five strengths⁹³ in turn. One cultivates the powers during the two phases of meditative warmth and the peak experience, and the five strengths during the two phases of patient acceptance and the highest mundane experience.

Nature [d]

The distinctive features are: those in whom it awakens, what level it entails, and what one focuses on.

In order for one to come to a definitive conclusion concerning the nature of this path, there are three points: those whose experience serves as the basis for the onset of this path; the levels of attainment on which it is dependent; and the context on which one focuses. As for the first of these, it is said that the path of linkage can be experienced only by men and women of three continents,⁹⁴ or by gods in any of the six states within the realm of desire⁹⁵ (that is, it can be experienced by someone who formerly, while a human being, gained an experience of the path of linkage and then was reborn in one of the states of the gods of the realm of desire). In certain Mahāyāna sources that adopt an extraordinary perspective,⁹⁶ it is also explained that it can be experienced by *nāgas* and certain other kinds of animals. [4.108.a]

The second feature concerns the levels of attainment on which the path of linkage is dependent. The path of linkage in the śrāvaka approach

is dependent on the six levels of meditative stability: that is, the entirely sufficient preparatory phase of the first level of meditative stability, the actual level per se, the distinctive aspect of this level, and the three actual remaining levels.⁹⁷ Those who have not previously become free of desire depend on the preparatory phase of the first level of meditative stability, while those who still have intention but are free of desire depend on the actual level. The path of linkage in the approach of pratyekabuddhas who participate in groups is dependent on any of these six levels of meditative stability; in the approach of those who are said to be “like a rhinoceros,” it is dependent on the actual stage of the fourth level of stability.⁹⁸ As for a bodhisattva,⁹⁹ a Vaibhāṣika source states:¹⁰⁰

The Teacher and those who are like rhinoceroses, when they become enlightened, attain all in a single, final state of meditative stability.¹⁰¹

That is to say, the Vaibhāṣikas hold that this path is dependent on the fourth level of meditative stability. Alternatively, some Mahāyāna authorities maintain that it is dependent on the actual stage of any one of the four levels of meditative stability.

As for the third feature, the context on which one focuses, the Sautrāntikas hold that during the three phases of meditative warmth, peak experience, and patient acceptance one focuses on the lack of any independent nature in perceived objects, while during that of the highest mundane experience one focuses on the lack of any independent nature of the perceiving mind. Concerning the realization that perceived objects have no independent nature, the Sautrāntikas further state that the phase of meditative warmth entails one’s gaining this experience to a slight degree, the phase of the peak experience entails this increasing to a middling degree, and the phase of patient acceptance entails a great degree of stable realization.

Certain Mahāyāna authorities hold that with the phase of meditative warmth one realizes that perceived objects have no independent nature, while with the phases of patient acceptance and the highest mundane experience one realizes that the perceiving mind has no independent nature. That is to say, they maintain the following: The phase of meditative warmth entails the realization that those perceived objects connected with deeply ingrained afflictive states¹⁰² have no independent nature,

while the phase of the peak experience entails the realization that those perceived objects connected with the completely refined state of enlightenment have no independent nature. Concerning the realization that the perceiving mind has no independent nature, they maintain that the phase of patient acceptance entails the realization that the perceiving mind, as it constitutes the basis for the substantial existence of the individual,¹⁰³ has no independent nature; the phase of the highest mundane experience entails the same realization regarding the perceiving mind [4.108.b] as it constitutes the basis for the imputed existence of the individual.¹⁰⁴ As the *Ornament of Manifest Realization* states:

Due to the ground of being and the antidotes it entails,
there are two ways in which perceived objects are conceptualized;
through the specific points of delusion, the mind-body aggregates,
and so forth,
these have nine distinct implications.

On the basis of what is, in essence, a seemingly autonomous self,
for example,
as well as such factors as the mind-body aggregates,
it is also held that there are two ways in which the perceiving mind
is experienced:
as the basis for substantial existence and that of imputed
existence.¹⁰⁵

“In what kind of mind,” one might wonder, “are the experiences of the anticipatory phases to be found?” They are found primarily in the reflexive consciousness¹⁰⁶ that has become familiarized with them through the three kinds of sublime intelligence;¹⁰⁷ for example, the reflexive consciousness that is familiar with desire and other afflictive states.¹⁰⁸

Distinctive Processes [e]

There is elimination since the obscuring layer of conceptual labeling is done away with;
and there is involvement through a process of realizing the two ways in which any independent nature is lacking.¹⁰⁹

Elimination takes place through a process of completely doing away with the conceptual labeling that is associated with the afflictive and cognitive obscurations.¹¹⁰ With respect to the Truths, realization concerns the lack of any independent nature in perceived objects (that is, one-half of the equation that constitutes the seeming identity of phenomena).¹¹¹

Alternatively, some Mahāyāna authorities hold that the respective paths of linkage in the three spiritual approaches entail the following states of realization:

(1) For the śrāvaka approach, the phases of meditative warmth and the peak experience bring realization of the lack of any independent nature in the seeming identity of the individual personality, while the phases of patient acceptance and the highest mundane experience bring this realization as it relates to the perceiving mind associated with the individual personality.

(2) For the pratyekabuddha approach, the phases of meditative warmth and the peak experience bring a partial degree of realization that perceived objects (that is, both the seeming identity of the individual personality and that of phenomena) lack any independent nature, while the phases of patient acceptance and the highest mundane experience bring a partial degree of this realization as it relates to the perceiving mind associated with both kinds of seeming identity.

(3) For the bodhisattva approach, the phases of meditative warmth and the peak experience bring realization that perceived objects (that is, both the seeming identity of the individual personality and that of phenomena) lack any independent nature, while the phases of patient acceptance and the highest mundane experience bring this realization as it relates to the perceiving mind associated with both kinds of seeming identity.

Concerning the path of linkage in these three approaches, the exalted Nāgārjuna states that, aside from differences in the methods used and differences in the precision of one's focus during each of the four anticipatory phases, [4.109.a] there is no difference with respect to the realization of the lack of identity in things.¹¹² This is also the enlightened intention found in extensive and middle-length sources of the Buddha's word,¹¹³ such as in the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras, in which it is stated:

Those who wish to train on the levels of the śrāvakas, moreover, should . . . train in this transcendent perfection of sublime intelligence, . . .¹¹⁴

and the *Compendium*, which remarks:

Those who intend to become śrāvaka followers of the Sugata,
or who wish to become pratyekabuddhas, or likewise rulers of the
dharma,¹¹⁵
cannot attain these states without relying on this acceptance.¹¹⁶

Qualities [f]

One is endowed with qualities such as experiencing no
interruption and no falling.

That is to say, as the *Ornament of the Sūtras* states:

Through the attainment of the peak experience, there is no
interruption;¹¹⁷
through the attainment of patient acceptance, one does not fall
into lower states of rebirth¹¹⁸ and the like.¹¹⁹

And the sūtra the *Cloud of the Rare and Excellent* states that one is free of
the deterioration experienced by an ordinary individual and is endowed
with many qualities, such as meditative absorption, the power of complete
recall,¹²⁰ complete liberation, and levels of deeper discernment.¹²¹ As well,
the “*Mother*” and the *Ornament*¹²² state that those of keen acumen experi-
ence incontrovertible signs that they will attain perfect enlightenment.

Function [g]

The misperception of things having identity is eliminated, and
there is the onset of the first level.

Though still aspects of sublime intelligence born of mundane states of
meditation, these four phases that anticipate the decisive breakthrough¹²³
ensure that the four erroneous perceptions concerning the seeming iden-
tity of the individual personality and phenomena¹²⁴ are eliminated and
awaken in one the realization of the first level of realization, that is, the
path of seeing.

Derivation of the Terms [h]

As for the derivation of the terms, these are “phases that anticipate the decisive breakthrough,”

“engagement through firm conviction,” and “linkage” to the direct realization of ultimate reality.

The terms are derived in the following ways:

- ▶ Completely nonconceptual timeless awareness associated with the path of seeing, which is comparable to a fire, utterly eradicates all the erroneous concepts of ordinary individuals and so constitutes a decisive breakthrough. If the path of seeing is taken to be the actual breakthrough, these are “phases that anticipate the decisive breakthrough” because they are in accord with it.
- ▶ Through the influence of one’s firm conviction concerning the actual nature of phenomena, [4.109.b] one experiences patient acceptance, and so this is referred to as “the level of engagement through firm conviction.”¹²⁵
- ▶ This is a process whereby the sublime intelligence born of mundane states of meditation eradicates the seemingly self-justifying concepts based on dualistic perception, and links one to the path of seeing, that is, the direct realization of ultimate reality, the basic space of phenomena. Therefore, it is called “the path of linkage.”
- ▶ “Engagement through firm conviction” is in fact a term that is explained as applying to both the path of accumulation and that of linkage.

The Path of Seeing [3]

The explanation of the path of seeing also has eight topics: a definition of its characteristics; an identification of what is so characterized; a detailed analysis; a definitive statement about its nature; its distinctive processes of elimination and realization; a description of its qualities; a statement about what its function is; and a demonstration of the derivation of the term.

Characteristics [a]

The path of seeing is the fresh new perception of suchness, . . .

That is, it constitutes whatever serves as the foundation for the process of attaining nirvāṇa, the transcendence of sorrow, and which is included within the circumstances of one's directly realizing suchness as a fresh new experience.

Basis [b]

. . . a transcendent harmony
of calm abiding and deeper insight . . .

The basis for what can be characterized as the path of seeing (that is, as the antidote that effects partial elimination¹²⁶ is the direct experience of the actual nature of phenomena as it applies to the Four Truths. It embodies a harmonious accord between calm abiding and deeper insight that transcend the ordinary mundane context.

Analysis [c]

. . . that is indivisible in its very essence.
One trains primarily in the seven aids to enlightenment.

If we analyze this path from the standpoint of the individual on whose experience it is based, there are two steps: initial entrance into a state and stable abiding in it.¹²⁷ If we analyze it from the standpoint of spiritual approaches, there are three versions of the path of seeing as it relates to the śrāvaka, pratyekabuddha, and bodhisattva approaches. If we analyze it from the standpoint of what it is in essence, it can be analyzed into sixteen steps, for example; but that model is according to the śrāvaka interpretation. In its very essence, the path of seeing is not divisible because it is subsumed within a single instant. On this path one trains in authentic mindfulness and the rest of the seven aids to enlightenment.¹²⁸

Nature [d]

This topic involves two detailed classifications: the way in which the factors to be eliminated on the path of seeing are removed, [4.110.a] and the onset of the path of seeing.

Elimination on the Path of Seeing [i]

The factors to be eliminated on the path of seeing are 88, 94, 112, and so forth¹²⁹ It is held that they are eliminated through processes that cause the cessation of prior influences and cause new influences to come into being, and through the awakening of nondual timeless awareness.

To come to a definitive understanding of the nature of this path involves three points: the characteristics of the factors to be eliminated; a detailed analysis of these factors; and the way in which these factors are eliminated.

Characteristics of the Factors to Be Eliminated [aa]

First, generally speaking the characteristics of afflictive states per se are such that they prevent the continuity of one's consciousness from experiencing any calmness. In particular, though, the characteristics of factors to be eliminated on the path of seeing are such that, due to the conceptual labeling they foster, they utterly prevent the mind from experiencing calmness.

Detailed Analysis of the Factors to Be Eliminated [bb]

The detailed analysis has two topics: an analysis based on what these are in essence and an analysis based on how they are eliminated.

The first analysis also has two topics: primary and secondary afflictive states. If the primary afflictive states are eliminated, the secondary ones are eliminated as a matter of course.

To discuss the former first, then, there are six afflictive states: desire, anger, pride, ignorance, doubt, and ideological fixation. There are five kinds of ideological fixation: three are the fixations of holding the transitory

mind-body aggregates to constitute something real,¹³⁰ of holding to philosophical absolutes,¹³¹ and of holding erroneous philosophical opinions¹³² and two are the fixations of regarding one's biased opinions to be absolutes and of regarding personal rules of deportment to be absolutes.¹³³

The second analysis also has two topics: the factors to be eliminated on the path of seeing, and those to be eliminated on the path of meditation.

In the first case, in the Vaibhāṣika tradition, the *Treasury of Abhidharma* states:

There are ten factors, then seven, seven, and eight—
omitting the three and the two belief systems—
that are eliminated in the realms of desire and so forth
through one's perceiving suffering and the other Truths.¹³⁴

With this, they hold that there are eighty-eight factors to be eliminated.¹³⁵

The *Summary* discusses 94 factors to be eliminated on the path of seeing.¹³⁶ The *Compendium of Abhidharma*¹³⁷ explains that there are 40 factors in the context of the realm of desire: 10 factors (the 5 states of deeply ingrained afflictive states plus the 5 factors included under the heading of ideological fixation) for each of the Four Truths. In the context of the two higher realms, in each there are 9 factors (since anger is absent) for each of the Four Truths, making 36 (that is, 9 times 4) times 2, to give 72. [4.110.b] This makes for a total of 112 factors.

One might object, "But there are 4 factors that do not apply to the realm of formlessness. It is untenable that in that realm one regards discipline and personal rules of deportment to be absolutes, taking physical and verbal conduct to be the causes of purification and liberation. So this means there are only 108 factors to be eliminated on the path of seeing." But this is not the case.¹³⁸ Even though physical and verbal conduct are absent in this realm, and so not taken to be the causes of purification and liberation, there is the perception that the mental outlook in that realm does serve as the cause of natural freedom, and this is classified as regarding discipline and personal rules of deportment to be absolutes. One might further object, "If that is so, doesn't that make these factors cases of regarding one's opinions to be absolutes?" But such is not the case. Regarding one's opinions to be absolutes takes the form of regarding

them to be supreme or foremost, while regarding discipline and personal rules of deportment to be absolutes takes the form of regarding them to cause purification, liberation, and so forth. So the manner in which they are regarded is different. “Well,” one might persist, “although suffering and its origin pertain to all three realms, the cessation of suffering and the path to this, which are incorruptible, do not, so it is untenable to posit cessation and the path to each of the three realms.” But in fact this poses no problem, for as the *Synopsis* explains:

... this is from the standpoint of all three realms.¹³⁹

That is to say, in the case of all of the painful factors to be eliminated being factors that pertain to the realm of desire, the term “the cessation of suffering in the realm of desire” designates the cessation of this suffering and its attendant causes, while “the path in the realm of desire” designates the means by which that cessation becomes fully evident. The cessation and the path as they apply to the two higher realms are designated in a similar manner.

A further objection might be, “The *Compendium of Abhidharma* discusses 112 factors to be eliminated on the path of seeing, while the *Synopsis* discusses only 94. Isn’t this a contradiction?” Concerning this point, some say that the difference is one between the Yogācāra and Sautrāntika traditions, but there is a preferable explanation: that these texts are explaining the enlightened intent underlying different sūtras, classifying these factors on a more obvious or more subtle level.

How These Factors Are Eliminated [cc]

Third, as to the way such factors are eliminated, from the tradition of the śrāvakas,¹⁴⁰ the *Treasury of Abhidharma* states: [4.III.a]

Through a process that causes the cessation of prior influences, the obscurations pertaining to that path are utterly eliminated.¹⁴¹

Thus, they hold that these factors are eliminated through a process that causes these prior influences to cease.¹⁴²

Those who follow the interpretation common to the śrāvaka and Mahāyāna approaches¹⁴³ would alter the above lines to the following:

Through a process that causes new influences to come into being, the obscurations pertaining to that path are utterly eliminated.

This is due to the fact that they hold that these factors are eliminated through a process that causes new influences (that is, antidotes) to come into being.

According to those who follow the extraordinary interpretation specific to the Mahāyāna approach,¹⁴⁴ neither factors to be eliminated nor their antidotes can be found to exist in any ultimate sense, and so both processes (whether bringing new influences into being or causing prior ones to cease) are untenable. As the *Ornament of Manifest Realization* states:

There is nothing whatsoever to be removed from this,
nor anything in the slightest to be added.¹⁴⁵

And in *Engaging in the Conduct of a Bodhisattva*:

With things being thus empty,
what is there to gain, what is there to lose?¹⁴⁶

The Onset of the Path of Seeing [ii]

The second treatment is a detailed classification of the onset of the path of seeing:

There are four distinctive features: onset, dependence, the way realization occurs, and sequential steps.

The onset of the path of seeing is a process that includes: those whose experience serves as the basis for the onset of this path, the level of realization on which it depends, the way in which realization comes about, and the development of this path through numerous sequential steps.

As for the first of these, it is said that the onset of this path can be experienced only by men and women of three continents, or by gods of the realm of desire (more specifically, those who are of keen acumen, hold the oral transmission of the Buddha's teachings, and have a great degree of disenchantment with the world). The onset of this path is not

experienced by beings in the three lower realms (for they are prevented from doing so by the great obscurations imposed by the inevitable consequences of their karma), nor by humans on the continent of Kuru or gods in the two higher realms (for they cannot feel this disenchantment).

As for the second feature (the level of realization on which this path depends), for śrāvakas, the path of seeing depends on any of the six levels of meditative stability. In this regard, those who have not previously become free of desire [4.III.b] depend on the preparatory stage of the first level of meditative stability, while those who are free of desire depend on the actual level itself. The path does not depend on any level within the realm of desire; the path of seeing embodies a harmonious accord between calm abiding and deeper insight, and the realm of desire allows for only a small degree of calm abiding, for there is a great deal of mental distraction. It also does not depend on the realm of form, for this realm allows only a small degree of deeper insight. While it would be possible for the path of seeing to be awakened if one strove to attain the preparatory stages of the second level of meditative stability and other levels, it would be difficult for it to awaken, for these allow only a small degree of calm abiding.

One might object, “But if that is the case, doesn’t the same shortcoming apply to the preparatory stage of the first level?” No, it doesn’t. Why is this so? Because the onset of the path of seeing must depend on one’s state of mind when experiencing the actual stage of the first level of meditative stability, but if the actual stage has not been attained, it is easy to attain the preparatory stage of the first level. As well, it does not depend on the preparatory stage of the second level, for it is sufficient that it depend on the actual stage of the first level, which is easier to attain.

For pratyekabuddhas, in the case of those who live in groups the path of seeing depends on any of the six levels of meditative stability, while for those who dwell alone like a rhinoceros it depends on the actual stage of the fourth level of meditative stability. “Well,” one might object, “it is unreasonable to assert that those pratyekabuddhas who live alone, when they die, are only reborn in the realm of desire because they have eliminated the afflictive states associated with the third level of meditative stability and lower.” But this assertion poses no problem.

As for the third feature (the way in which realization occurs), according to the tradition common to the śrāvaka and Mahāyāna approaches,¹⁴⁷ śrāvakas have realization of the lack of identity in the individual per-

sonality within the context of the Four Truths. They focus not on the Truths just as a formal set of topics but on the specific characteristics of the aspects of the Truths as laid out in a traditional classification.¹⁴⁸ Pratyekabuddhas have realization of the lack of any independent nature in either the seeming identity of the individual personality or that of phenomena perceived as objects. [4.112.2] Bodhisattvas have realization of both aspects of this lack of identity.¹⁴⁹

Concerning the extraordinary interpretation within the Mahāyāna approach,¹⁵⁰ the “Mother” states:

Those who wish to train on the levels of the śrāvakas, moreover, should . . . train in this transcendent perfection of sublime intelligence, . . .¹⁵¹

Following this and similar quotations from scriptures, the Exalted One and his followers¹⁵² maintain that there is no difference, in terms of the realization of the lack of identity, between the foregoing three kinds of practitioners.¹⁵³

As for the fourth feature, the development of this path through numerous sequential steps, there are two interpretations: that of the ordinary approach¹⁵⁴ and that of the extraordinary approach.¹⁵⁵ Concerning the first, the *Treasury of Abhidharma* states:

From the phase of the highest mundane experience comes incorruptible patient acceptance that produces an understanding of the Truth.¹⁵⁶

In the case of the suffering in the realm of desire, from that comes patient acceptance producing subsequent understanding.

Similarly, in the case of suffering in the remaining realms, from that comes patient acceptance producing subsequent understanding.

A similar process applies to the other three Truths.¹⁵⁷

In accord with such scriptural sources, the Vaibhāṣikas hold that in the wake of the highest mundane experience there are four steps:

- (1) patient acceptance producing an understanding of the phenomenon of suffering as it applies to the realm of desire;

- (2) the understanding of this phenomenon that ensues;
- (3) patient acceptance producing subsequent understanding of the suffering found in the higher realms; and
- (4) the subsequent understanding of this.¹⁵⁸

Applying this model to the remaining three Truths, they hold that these Truths are perceived through an incorruptible state of sublime intelligence that involves some sixteen steps. Concerning this, the *Treasury of Abhidharma* states:

According to the successive stages of patient acceptance and understanding,
there is the pathway without obstacles and the pathway of complete freedom.

There are fifteen steps to this process.

Because what has not been seen before is seen, it is the path of seeing. . .

. . . Its result lies in the sixteenth step.¹⁵⁹

As this quotation indicates, eight steps of patient acceptance¹⁶⁰ constitute the “pathway without obstacles,”¹⁶¹ which defines the attainment that comes from eliminating factors on the path of seeing, while eight steps of understanding constitute the “pathway of complete freedom,” which brings about the experience of attainment that comes from being free of these factors. The first fifteen of these steps [4.112.b] constitute the actual path of seeing, while the sixteenth pertains to the path of meditation, for it is the result of, and the continuation of, the path of seeing.

According to the Middle Way tradition of the Mahāyāna approach,¹⁶² the path of seeing is to be considered a single step,¹⁶³ from the point of view that it is not ultimately divisible, for the all-pervasive mode of the actual nature of phenomena¹⁶⁴ means that seeing anything “newer” is not logically valid;¹⁶⁵ thus, the assigning of sixteen steps is a means of eradicating speculative assumptions and enhancing one’s realization. That is to say, the four steps of patient acceptance constitute the pathway without obstacles, which removes the factors to be eliminated on the path of seeing (that is, the suffering that is entailed in the three realms). The four steps of understanding constitute the pathway of complete freedom, once these factors have been eliminated. The four steps of patient acceptance producing subsequent understanding constitute the pathway without

obstacles, which eradicates the speculative assumptions that the foregoing steps do not serve as causes of the future circumstances of a spiritually advanced being. The four steps of subsequent understanding constitute the pathway of complete freedom, once these assumptions have been eliminated.

The *Major Commentary on the Transcendent Perfection of Sublime Intelligence in Eight Thousand Verses* states that there is only a single step with respect to the higher realization that results but sixteen steps from the standpoint of dispelling incorrect opinions concerning each of the Four Truths.¹⁶⁶ The *Adornment of the Sage's Intent* states that the patient acceptance producing an understanding of the phenomenon of suffering constitutes the path of seeing in the actual sense, while the other steps constitute this path in the purely nominal sense.¹⁶⁷ On the basis of varying levels of acumen, other sources hold that there are anywhere from one to sixteen steps. The interpretation clearly expressed in the *Compendium of Abhidharma* is that there are sixteen steps that occur in an uninterrupted succession, for to say otherwise would be at odds with divisions of the path into stages of "initial entrance" and "stable abiding,"¹⁶⁸ into strictly demarcated levels of acumen, and so forth.¹⁶⁹

In all such contexts, the term "step"¹⁷⁰ refers to "the time needed to complete some function," that is, defining such a step on the basis of this or that function having come to completion.

According to the extraordinary interpretation,¹⁷¹ the idiom used is that in actual fact a bodhisattva gains patient acceptance of the fact that things are not produced;¹⁷² the position is not one of the onset of the path of seeing taking place in any ultimate sense. [4.113.a] For as one of the sūtras states:

The single truth is that things are not produced.

Some extrapolate four truths from that fact.

When one is resting in the very essence of enlightenment, even a single truth cannot be found to exist,¹⁷³ so how possibly could four?¹⁷⁴

And as the *Sixty Verses of Reasoning* states:

If there were still distinctions to be made in the wake of the understanding of phenomena,¹⁷⁵

and someone were to discern production of some extremely subtle thing,¹⁷⁶
 that person, being completely unwise,¹⁷⁷
 would not have seen how things are only conditionally produced.¹⁷⁸

One might raise the point, “How can it be, then, that the sūtras describe the path of seeing as consisting of anywhere from one to sixteen steps?” The Buddha’s intention underlying these models was one of guiding those who are proponents of materialist philosophies.¹⁷⁹ The basis for this intention lies in the process of interdependent origination, and its purpose is one of engaging those with overt materialist fixations. In undermining this materialist position, the *Source Verses on Sublime Intelligence* states:

Neither from themselves, nor from anything other,
 neither from both, nor without cause,
 no thing whatsoever, under any circumstances,
 ever entails production.¹⁸⁰

It thus refutes the production of things by disproving it through these four alternatives. Furthermore, if one determines that the onset of the path of seeing occurs through numerous sequential steps, then one should be able to determine the breakdown of these numerous sequential steps, which in this interpretation is logically absurd. Again, as the *Source Verses on Sublime Intelligence* states:

You might think, “What I have ‘seen’ is the occurrence and breakdown of things.”
 But the occurrence and breakdown of things are corruptions due to ignorance.¹⁸¹

One might then object, “Doesn’t the fact that things occur interdependently constitute some kind of production?” No, it does not. The sūtra the *Request of Anavatapta* states:

Whatever is produced through dependence is not, in fact,
 produced;
 it does not have production in its nature.

Whatever relies on circumstances, that is emptiness.
Whoever understands this to be emptiness is prudent.¹⁸²

And the exalted Nāgārjuna states: [4.113.b]

I am not refuting the mundane habit of saying,
“Depending on that, this occurs.”
But whatever occurs in interdependent origination has no
independent nature;
how, with any certainty, can one say about it, “It exists”?¹⁸³

And he also stated:

Because there is no phenomenon
that does not occur through interdependent origination,
therefore there is no phenomenon
that is not emptiness.¹⁸⁴

Given these and other extensive discussions, all phenomena are unproduced.

Distinctive Processes [e]

How things are is perceived directly; how many there are is realized in some appropriate manner.

With the factors to be eliminated on the path of seeing having been removed and the significance of the actual nature of phenomena, just as it is, having been realized in one's direct experience, the significance of how many things there are (that is, the objects of the phenomenal world) is realized in some appropriate manner. The *Ornament of the Sūtras* states:

Then there is realization as the direct experience of the basic space
of phenomena,
free of the characteristics of duality.¹⁸⁵

Qualities [f]

There is freedom from five states of fear, and there are twelve hundredfold qualities.

Someone on the path of seeing is, for example, free of five states of fear,¹⁸⁶ including [the fear of] lower states of rebirth, and gains the capacity to experience twelve hundredfold qualities (such as the attainment of one hundred simultaneous states of meditative absorption).¹⁸⁷ However, it is also held that there is still a residual inborn sense of individual selfhood, and so the afflictive states that derive from that are still present as latent instincts; therefore, even though there is no fixation on anything whatsoever as “real,” there can still be circumstances that provoke momentary states of anxiety, just as a person might be frightened upon seeing a human-shaped cairn on a mountain pass. Likewise, there are definitely still traces of all-consuming conceptual labeling, such as the fear of falling back into saṃsāra should one’s attention wander, or the desire for fame and reputation.

These are not, however, firmly established, as they are in ordinary individuals. Rather, they are undermined by a moment’s recollection, without one having to rely on some antidote. Briefly stated, therefore, it is said that once one has attained the path of seeing, even though ordinary thoughts arise, they are undermined in the next moment, and timeless awareness holds sway, so that henceforth one traverses the paths as a matter of course, without concerted effort being necessary, [4.114.a] like an arrow in flight.

Function [g]

This frees one from conditioned existence and ensures one’s gaining the level of nirvāṇa.

With the removal of all the factors to be eliminated (that is, afflictive states based on all-consuming conceptual labeling), the causes and conditions that perpetuate saṃsāra are exhausted. Thus, one is freed from conditioned existence, and saṃsāra is permanently left behind; this ensures that one gains the level of nirvāṇa, the “transcendence of sorrow.”

Derivation of the Term [h]

This is incorruptible virtue, the antidote involving elimination,
the initial arousal.

The derivation of the term lies in the direct experience of what is
free of elaboration.

This path is described by such terms as “incorruptible virtue,” serving as the antidote to what is substantial and therefore corruptible; “the antidote involving elimination” since it brings about the utter elimination of afflictive states, which constitute the factors to be eliminated on the path of seeing; and “the initial arousal of transcendent mind” since it constitutes the first experience of a spiritually advanced being. The meaning behind the derivation of the term “the path of seeing” lies in the fact that there is direct “seeing” of what has not been seen before, that is, the actual nature of phenomena, free of elaboration,¹⁸⁸ which is the truth for the spiritually advanced.

“Well,” one might wonder, “what is the difference between this and the realization that takes place within the context of the path of linkage?” Realization in the path of seeing constitutes directly perceiving the specific characteristics of the nature of phenomena, while realization in the path of linkage constitutes partial realization of that nature in a way that approximates the former.

The Path of Meditation [4]

The explanation of the path of meditation also has eight topics: a definition of its characteristics; an identification of what is so characterized; a detailed analysis; a definitive statement about its nature; its distinctive processes of elimination and realization; a description of its qualities; a statement about what its function is; and a demonstration of the derivation of the term.

Characteristics [a]

The path of meditation constitutes situations in which one
becomes familiar with distinctive states.

The path of meditation is characterized as follows: Whatever constitutes the entry to the state of complete freedom and is included within the situations of one's becoming familiar with distinctive states of meditative absorption.

Basis [b]

That direct realization is integrated into one's ongoing experience.
[4.114.b]

As for the basis for characterizing this path, (the antidote that removes all the limitless factors to be eliminated), it is the process whereby the significance of the realization of the actual nature of phenomena (which is brought about in one's direct experience through the path of seeing) becomes familiar to, and is integrated into, one's ongoing experience.

Analysis [c]

There are two considerations: a mundane path of meditation and the transcendent path of meditation. With respect to the first:

The corruptible path of meditation can be understood from the foregoing discussions.

The corruptible path of meditation within the sphere of this world is illustrated by, and can be understood from, the discussions in the section on the "approach of purity" given earlier in this work,¹⁸⁹ and so I will not deal with it further at this point.

With respect to the second kind of path:

For the incorruptible transcendent path, the working bases are those of the śrāvaka, pratyekabuddha, and bodhisattva. It includes four pathways: that of linkage, that without obstacles, that of complete freedom, and that of distinctive features. In essence, it is of greater, middling, or lesser degrees. Analyzed as to what is becoming familiar (that is, meditative equipoise or postmeditation awareness), it is twofold. One trains in the eightfold path of noble ones.

The incorruptible path of meditation directed toward nirvāṇa can be analyzed in five ways, according to: the working basis; what factors are to be eliminated; the pathways entailed; its essence; and what becomes familiar.

- (1) In the first place, there are three versions of the path of meditation: for the śrāvaka, the pratyekabuddha, and the bodhisattva.
- (2) In the second place, to analyze this path according to the factors to be eliminated, there are 414 factors¹⁹⁰ to be eliminated on the path of meditation, and as well an equal number of antidotes to these.
- (3) In the third place, to analyze it into the pathways it includes, there are four: the pathway of linkage, the pathway without obstacles, the pathway of complete freedom, and the pathway of distinctive features.
- (4) In the fourth place, to analyze it according to its essence, it has three degrees: greater, middling, and lesser.
- (5) In the fifth place, to analyze the path of meditation according to what becomes familiar, it is twofold, with this familiarization being brought about through meditative equipoise and postmeditation awareness.

Within the context of this path, one trains in authentic view and the rest of the branches of the eightfold path of noble ones.¹⁹¹

Nature [d]

The 414 factors to be eliminated on the path of meditation are removed through antidotes.

The distinctive features are those in whom it awakens, what level it entails, and what one focuses on.

In presenting the nature of this path, [4.115.a] there are two considerations: the way in which the factors to be eliminated on the path of meditation are removed, and the development of the path of seeing.

Elimination on the Path of Meditation [i]

As for the first consideration, there are three further points: the characteristics of the factors to be eliminated on the path of meditation, a

detailed analysis of these factors, and the way in which they are eliminated through antidotes.

First, these are factors associated with the inborn sense of individual selfhood, which ensure that the mind is utterly unable to experience a state of peace.

Second, there are six inborn afflictive states associated with the realm of desire.¹⁹² There are forty associated with the two higher realms, five (since anger is absent) for each of the eight levels (the first level of meditative stability and the rest). Taken together, these total 46 factors. Each of these has three degrés (greater, middling, and lesser), and each of these in turn is subdivided into the greater of the greater and so forth, making nine degrees for each factor, giving a final total of 414 factors.

Third, one should understand that the way in which these factors are eliminated through antidotes is similar to the process explained under the path of seeing.

The Development of the Path of Meditation [ii]

As for the second consideration, the development of the path of seeing, there are three features: those whose experience serves as the basis for the development of this path, the levels of attainment on which it is dependent, and the context on which one focuses. As for the first of these, the development of this path can be experienced by men and women of three continents, or by gods other than those in states devoid of perception¹⁹³ and those at the pinnacle of conditioned existence;¹⁹⁴ this is because all of their merit is such that it can serve to support the experience. The development of this path cannot be experienced by beings in the three lower states, by humans on the continent of Uttarakuru, or by those who are asexual or hermaphroditic since their obscurations are too great.¹⁹⁵ Gods in states devoid of perception also cannot experience this since their minds are unclear, nor can those at the pinnacle of conditioned existence since they do not see the alternative of a state of peace higher than their state.¹⁹⁶

As for the second feature, in the śrāvaka approach the path of meditation is dependent on nine levels, that is, the four actual levels of meditative stability, the preparatory phase of the first level of meditative stability, the distinctive aspect of this actual level,¹⁹⁷ and the three resultant levels in the realm of formlessness.¹⁹⁸ The reasons that it is not dependent on

any other levels are as follows: the minds of beings in the realm of desire are not adaptable enough,¹⁹⁹ while the minds of those at the pinnacle of conditioned existence lack clarity. This path is also not dependent on the preparatory stages of the other three levels of meditative stability²⁰⁰ and the first three states of the realm of formlessness, [4.115.b] for these stages entail concerted effort to attain the next higher stage and thus allow for only a small degree of calm abiding, and on that basis there can be no integration of calm abiding and deeper insight in these states.

As for the path of meditation in the pratyekabuddha approach, for those who live in groups this path depends on any of the six levels of meditative stability, while for those who dwell alone like a rhinoceros it depends on the actual stage of the fourth level of meditative stability.

The path of meditation in the bodhisattva approach depends on the utterly pure fourth level of meditative stability. However, as for the level on which one is reborn, due to one's karma and aspirations one can be reborn in the two realms of desire and form (not that of formlessness) and then, when one is training in meditative absorption (resting in the meditative equipoise through such approaches as that of "the majestic lion" or "progress in leaps and bounds"²⁰¹), one is resting in the equipoise of these states of formlessness and cessation.

As for the third feature, the context on which one focuses, according to the interpretation common to the śrāvaka and Mahāyāna approaches,²⁰² in the wake of the path of seeing one becomes more familiar with a harmonious accord between calm abiding and deeper insight that focuses on the actual nature of the Four Truths. According to the extraordinary interpretation specific to the Mahāyāna approach,²⁰³ one becomes more familiar with the connection that the actual nature of phenomena and timeless awareness (which are realized on the path of seeing) have with all limitless objects in the phenomenal world.²⁰⁴

Distinctive Processes [e]

It is the cognitive obscurations that are primarily eliminated, and the actual nature of phenomena is truly realized.

The factors to be eliminated on the path of meditation are all the remaining entrapping factors²⁰⁵ that could not be removed on the path of seeing;

these are gradually eliminated. In particular, in the Mahāyāna approach, as the *Ornament of the Sūtras* states:

Once the afflictive states that are to be eliminated through the path of seeing have all been thoroughly exhausted, in order to remove the cognitive obscurations, one engages intensively in meditation.²⁰⁶

Thus, it is the cognitive obscurations that are primarily eliminated. And as Haribhadra states:

because the focus is no different than what is described as being directly perceived through the path of seeing . . .²⁰⁷

This means that the direct realization of the actual nature of phenomena is in complete harmony with that of the path of seeing. [4.116.a] That is to say, this is primarily due to the transcendent path of meditation; the mundane path of meditation brings about saṃsāra as its result, and so is inferior to the path of seeing.

Qualities [f]

The distinctive qualities continue to increase.

In the wake of the development of this path, the factors included within the higher states of realization and the distinctive qualities associated with the ten spiritual levels continue to increase more and more.

Function [g]

One traverses the ten successive levels, becoming free of latent obscurations.

The factors to be eliminated (that is, all the afflictive and cognitive obscurations that are still present as inborn latent potentials) are totally removed. With this, the ten transcendent levels are experienced fully. The levels up to and including the seventh are “impure levels” since there is still the risk that someone of very low acumen could revert to a lesser

degree of enlightenment;²⁰⁸ the levels from the eighth up are “pure levels” since there can be no reverting from them.

Derivation of the Term [h]

The term derives from the process of bringing familiarity with realization.

As for the derivation of the term, this path is called “the path of meditation” since it is the process that brings one familiarity with meditation on the suchness that is realized in the path of seeing.²⁰⁹ It is also referred to as “the foundation of incorruptible virtue” since it is not subject to any degeneration; and as “the antidote that eliminates” since it constitutes an antidote to anything that is to be eliminated through meditation.²¹⁰

The Path of Consummation [s]

The explanation of the path of consummation also has eight topics: a definition of its characteristics; an identification of what is so characterized; a detailed analysis; a definitive statement about its nature; its distinctive processes of elimination and realization; a description of its qualities; a statement about what its function is; and a demonstration of the derivation of the term.

Characteristics [a]

In the path of consummation, there is direct realization of the consummate degree of what is cultivated in meditation.

The path of consummation is characterized as follows: Whatever constitutes the foundation for gaining the state of nirvāṇa and is included within the situation of direct realization of the consummate degree of what is cultivated in meditation.

Basis [b]

The basis underlying these characteristics is the vajralike samādhi at the very threshold of enlightenment,²¹¹ the level of Total Illumination, and so forth. [4.116.b]

The basis underlying the characteristics of this path (which constitutes the antidote that leads to the culmination of the process of elimination) is that of abiding on the eleventh level, that of buddhahood, or “Total Illumination,” once the vajralike meditative absorption, the final limit of the continuum of the ten spiritual levels, has eliminated the obscurations; these are both the afflictive states that seem to be ingrained like marrow or butterfat,²¹² and even the most subtle of the cognitive obscurations.

Analysis [c]

This path is analyzed according to three approaches, two paths, three levels, and so forth.

The ten factors that require no more training are included within the five incorruptible components.

If we analyze this path according to spiritual approaches, there are three versions: the path of no more training for śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and bodhisattvas. Alternatively, it can be analyzed into two pathways: the pathway without obstacles and the pathway of complete freedom. Or it can be analyzed into three levels, namely, that of the factors that require no more training, the level of realization that “the task is finished,” and the level on which obscurations have been eliminated. Two further factors that are specific to the path of no more training are the knowledge that the afflictive states, which were to have been eliminated, have in fact been removed, and the knowledge that suffering, which will no longer occur, will in fact no longer occur.

In the above contexts, there are ten factors that require no more training: the consummate stages of the branches of the eightfold path of noble ones (from the view that requires no more training, up to meditative absorption that requires no more training); the utterly liberated state of authentic mind that requires no more training; and the utterly liberated state of authentic sublime intelligence that requires no more

training. These ten factors can also be considered from the standpoint of the five “incorruptible components”: (1) three factors (authentic speech, activity, and livelihood that require no more training) constitute the component of discipline; (2) two factors (meditative absorption and mindfulness) constitute the component of meditative absorption; (3) three factors (view, thought, and diligence) constitute the component of sublime intelligence;²¹³ (4) the utterly liberated state of mind constitutes the component of complete freedom; and (5) the utterly liberated state of sublime intelligence constitutes the component of the vision that is the utterly liberated state of timeless awareness.²¹⁴

Nature [d]

The nature includes those in whom it awakens, what level it entails, and what one focuses on. [4.117.a]

In coming to a definitive conclusion concerning the nature of this path, there are three features: those whose experience serves as the basis for the onset of this path; the levels of attainment on which it is dependent; and the context on which one focuses.

As for the first and second of these, according to the śrāvaka tradition it is held that the path of consummation is similar to the transcendent path of meditation discussed previously. According to the interpretation of the common Mahāyāna approach,²¹⁵ a human rebirth serves as the basis for this path, and in particular the bodhisattva²¹⁶ takes rebirth in a central country²¹⁷ of our world, in a priestly or warrior class;²¹⁸ as for the level of attainment, this path is held to ensue from the vajra-like samādhi on the fourth level of meditative stability. According to the interpretation of the extraordinary Mahāyāna approach,²¹⁹ a bodhisattva on the tenth level of realization serves as the basis for this path, while the path itself is held to ensue from the governing condition of the vajra-like samādhi, which takes place after the extremely pure fourth level of meditative stability.

As for the third feature, the context on which one focuses, according to the interpretation common to the śrāvaka and Mahāyāna approaches,²²⁰ through the vajralike samādhi one focuses on the Four Truths, or the Truth of Cessation, or else the ten factors that require no more training. According to the extraordinary interpretation specific to the

Mahāyāna approach,²²¹ one focuses on nirvāṇa that is in no way static or limited.²²²

Distinctive Processes [e]

All hindrances having been eliminated, there is reality just as it is and of things in all their multiplicity.

The distinctive processes of elimination and realization on this path are such that all the hindrances to the state of liberation specific to a given approach²²³ have been eliminated without exception, while the significance of reality just as it is—the actual nature of phenomena—is realized in its purity, unadulterated by absolutely any factors to be eliminated as these are defined in any given approach. Concerning the significance of things in all their multiplicity, according to the *Treasury of Abhidharma*, this is realized as follows:

Arhats, rhinoceros-like ones, and teachers,²²⁴ respectively, perceive two-thousandfold, three-thousandfold, and countless universes.²²⁵

Qualities [f]

The qualities, both common and especial, are inconceivable.

As for the qualities of this path, as an arhat one attains such common ones as the exhaustion of any corruptible elements and the absence of afflictive states. Especially,²²⁶ one attains such limitless qualities as the powers, the states of fearlessness, [4.117.b] the factors that distinguish buddhas from other beings, and the aspects of omniscience.²²⁷

Function [g]

This makes evident the kāyas and aspects of timeless awareness without exception.

The function of this path is that of making evident the three kāyas and four aspects of timeless awareness without exception.

Derivation of the Term [h]

As for the derivation of the terms, these are “the foundation of incorruptible virtue,”

“the antidote to conditioned existence,” and the completion of both the journey and the training.

This path is referred to as “the foundation of incorruptible virtue” since it is free of absolutely all that is corruptible; as “the antidote to conditioned existence”²²⁸ since it ensures that the afflictive states that have been eliminated do not occur again; and as “the path of consummation” since one has journeyed to the final point at which what is to be eliminated has been eliminated and what is to be known has become known. It is also called “the path of no more training” since one’s training has been completed.

“Well,” one might say, “why, then, is the term ‘path’ applied in this case?” In the earlier “moment” of the vajralike samādhi, there is something to be eliminated and something to be attained, while in the later “moment” there is the cause of that elimination and the cause of that attainment, and so this is referred to as the “path” of consummation.

Concerning the foregoing, the interpretation common to the śrāvaka and Mahāyāna approaches²²⁹ follows the *Treasury of Abhidharma*, which states:

In order to bring about mastery in the attainment,
higher and higher, of nirvāṇa and other states,
there is the faculty that brings all-knowing awareness,²³⁰
the faculty of all-knowing awareness,²³¹ and the faculty endowed
with all-knowing awareness.²³²

In accord with this quotation, the common interpretation maintains that the faculty that brings all-knowing awareness of what was previously unknown and that ensures mastery of the path of seeing is already present during the path of linkage; the faculty of all-knowing awareness, which ensures mastery of the path of meditation, is present during the path of seeing; and the faculty endowed with all-knowing awareness, which ensures mastery of the path of consummation, is in fact present during the path of meditation. The extraordinary interpretation specific to the

Mahāyāna approach, however, does not employ the conventional designations of these faculties.

The Levels of the Dialectical Approach [II]

The presentation of a classification of the spiritual levels has three topics: a general classification of two kinds of such levels; a discussion of the distinctions between them; and an extensive explanation of the levels associated with buddhahood.

Two Kinds of Levels [A]

There are two considerations: a concise overview and a more extensive explanation.

Overview [1]

As for the levels, in the broadest sense these are of two kinds:
those of freedom from attachment and those of buddhahood.
[4.118.a]

That is to say, in the broadest sense the levels that are the bases, or foundations, for the amassed qualities of spiritually advanced beings are classified as being of two kinds and are referred to as “the levels of freedom from desire and attachment” and “the levels associated with completely perfect buddhahood.” Alternatively, these two systems are referred to as “the levels of śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas” and “the levels of bodhisattvas”; or as “the basic approach, or Hīnayāna” and “the greater approach, or Mahāyāna.”

Extensive Explanation [2]

The second consideration concerns the two kinds of levels: those of freedom from attachment and those associated with buddhahood.²³³

The Levels of Freedom from Attachment [a]

The levels are called those of “spiritual potential,” “the eighth,” “seeing,” “subtlety,” “freedom,” “realization,” “the śrāvaka,” and “the pratyekabuddha.”

What is termed “the level of freedom from attachment” is, in fact, a reference to eight secondary levels that pertain to the basic Hīnayāna approach and primarily involve meditation on the lack of identity in the individual personality and on the Four Truths of noble ones. These levels are termed those of “spiritual potential,” “the eighth,” “seeing,” “subtlety,” “freedom from attachment,”²³⁴ “realization of what has been accomplished,” “śrāvaka,” and “pratyekabuddha.” It is in reference to these levels that the expression “powerful master of the eight levels”²³⁵ is employed.

- ▶ Initially, one gains the “level of completely perceiving what is positive.” This is the path of accumulation in the śrāvaka approach. It is so termed because the virtue undertaken on this path contributes to one’s liberation, so that it is liberation that is here termed entirely positive, while to focus on that liberation is in itself virtuous.
- ▶ The “level of spiritual potential” refers to both the greater degree of the phase of patient acceptance and the phase of the highest mundane experience on the path of linkage. Up to and including the phases of meditative warmth and the peak experience, it is still possible that one could turn to the Mahāyāna approach;²³⁶ up to the intermediate degree of the phase of patient acceptance, it is still possible that one could turn to the pratyekabuddha approach. However, from the greater degree of patient acceptance onward there is no possibility that one will turn to any other approach, and so one’s spiritual potential in the śrāvaka or pratyekabuddha approaches is ensured.
- ▶ The “level of the eighth” is that of initial entrance into the state of a stream-winner, that is, one who is entering the first of the eight fruition levels, counting back from that of an arhat.²³⁷ [4.118.b]
- ▶ The “level of seeing” is that of the fruition of a stream-winner²³⁸ because one directly perceives the topics of the Four Truths.
- ▶ The “level of subtlety” is that of the fruition of a once-returner²³⁹ because the majority of afflictive states with the realm of desire have been eliminated.

- ▶ The “level of freedom from attachment” is that of the fruition of a nonreturner²⁴⁰ because there is freedom from attachment even while one is still in the realm of desire.
- ▶ The “level of realization of what has been accomplished” is that of the fruition of an arhat,²⁴¹ that is, the path of the direct realization of the Four Truths.
- ▶ The “levels of the śrāvaka” refers collectively to the levels that are the basis for this analysis. Alternatively, this term can refer to the three remaining levels of initial entrance into the state of a once-returner and the rest²⁴² because the other manifest states of realization for śrāvakas are called by other specific names, and so a general term can here be understood to refer to specific levels.
- ▶ The “level of the pratyekabuddha” is that of one who gives rise to an attitude that holds the thirty-seven factors that contribute to enlightenment²⁴³ to be solely for one’s own awakening to buddhahood. With that, one pursues one’s spiritual development by serving buddhas for a hundred eons or more, whereupon, in one’s final rebirth, one is reborn in a realm devoid of either buddhas or śrāvakas. There, without relying on another to be one’s spiritual guide, one fully experiences enlightenment through one’s own power. This level will not be considered in my discussion of the spiritual levels.²⁴⁴

The Levels Associated with Buddhahood [b]

There are said to be ten bodhisattva levels in the Mahāyāna approach.

As for what are called “the levels associated with completely perfect buddhahood,” this refers to the ten spiritual levels that pertain to the Mahāyāna approach and primarily involve the cultivation of meditative absorption concerning the lack of both kinds of identity²⁴⁵ and emptiness as the nature of all phenomena. These ten levels, from that of “The Utterly Joyful One” to “The Cloud of Dharma,” are treated in the discussion that follows. Concerning these levels, the *Precious Garland* states:

Just as the teachings of the śrāvaka approach explain that there are eight levels of the śrāvakas, similarly, the teachings of the Mahāyāna approach demonstrate that there are ten bodhisattva levels.²⁴⁶

Concerning the level of buddhahood, there are analyses (for example, the explanation found in the *Sublimely Unchanging State*)²⁴⁷ that divides this further into two: the “level of reaching the state of suchness (*tathāgata*)” and [4.119.a] “the level of buddhahood.” This explanation is in accord with the intention found in certain commentarial treatises, which treat the ten transcendent levels as those of bodhisattvas and the eleventh as the level of buddhahood.

Distinctions between These Levels [B]

To discuss the distinctions between these levels:

There are distinctions concerning supernormal powers, levels of deeper discernment, realization, meditation, insight, language, spiritual teaching, benefit ensured, and nirvāṇa.

One might wonder, “What are the distinctions between the two systems of levels?”²⁴⁸ In fact, there are many. Thus, depending on the system, there are two kinds of supernormal powers: on the levels of freedom from attachment, more temporary powers that are limited in scope; and on the levels associated with buddhahood, powers that are fully developed.

Similarly, levels of deeper discernment are of two kinds. On the former (*śrāvaka*) levels,²⁴⁹ there are the five states other than that of knowledge of the exhaustion of all that is corruptible.²⁵⁰ On the latter (*bodhisattva*) levels, there are all six states, including the deeper discernment that entails knowledge of the exhaustion of any and all potential for the corrupting influences of afflictive states.

The realization of the lack of identity is also of two kinds. On the *śrāvaka* levels, there is simply the realization that the individual personality (which is imputed to the continuity of the five mind-body aggregates that perpetuate cyclic existence as its material causes) has no identity. On the *bodhisattva* levels, there is realization of the lack of identity in both the individual personality and in all imputed phenomena associated with it.

The way in which one meditates on the path of meditation is also of two kinds. On the *śrāvaka* levels, one meditates on the Four Truths

of noble ones. On the bodhisattva levels, one cultivates the meditative absorption on emptiness (that is, the lack of any truly inherent nature in any and all phenomena).

The insight involved, too, has two aspects. On the śrāvaka levels, one becomes aware of finite numbers of objects formerly hidden from one's direct experience. On the bodhisattva levels, one becomes aware of the enumerations of all things in their infinitude.

There are, as well, two aspects to the language used, the spiritual teachings given, and the benefit that is ensured. On the śrāvaka levels, one can use the languages of certain limited numbers of beings, give certain limited teachings, and ensure a certain limited amount of benefit thereby. On the bodhisattva levels, these factors are magnified [4.119.b] on a scale that includes countless beings.

Nirvāṇa, too, is of two kinds. The distinction lies in the fact that, through the śrāvaka levels, there remain residual traces of the mind-body aggregates since all the habitual patterns underlying the obscurations have not been eliminated without exception; while through the bodhisattva levels, there are no such residual traces since these patterns have all been eliminated without exception.

Extensive Explanation of the Levels Associated with Buddhahood [C]

The extensive explanation of the levels associated with buddhahood has six topics: what these levels are in essence; the bases for their characteristics; the derivation of the terms; an analysis; their distinctive features; and the reason for ascertaining ten levels.

Essence [1]

In essence, these levels are the foundation for superior qualities.

These levels, in essence, serve as the support, or foundation, for the gradual increase and flourishing of distinctive qualities. From the initial arousal of bodhicitta until the attainment of manifest enlightenment, these qualities function in harmony with the meditative absorption that facilitates sublime intelligence (which is to say, the realization of the lack of any identity) in the ongoing experience of bodhisattvas.

Basis of Characteristics [2]

The basis for what is so characterized is the unity of means and awareness in the ongoing experience of one undergoing training.

The basis for what is characterized as these levels is that which serves as the support for the distinctive qualities that function in harmony with sublime intelligence (that is, incorruptible timeless awareness associated with special skillful means), which in turn functions in the ongoing experience of bodhisattvas in training.

Derivation of the Term [3]

As for the derivation of the term, it implies “support,” “attainment,” “dispensing with,” and “proceeding further and further.”

If one wonders why the term “level” is employed, the *Ornament of the Sūtras* states:

Because one abides joyfully,
engaging thoroughly²⁵¹ in all ways
in various pursuits of virtue,
it is held that this abiding constitutes the levels of the
bodhisattvas.²⁵²

That is to say, these are termed “levels” since, like the great earth, they serve as foundations, contexts, or supports for limitless positive qualities. Alternatively, the same source states:

In order that countless beings become fearless,
there is a process of proceeding further and further
through these immeasurable states,
they are held to be levels.²⁵³

The equivalent Sanskrit term (for the Tibetan *sa*) is *bhūmi*. This is definitely to be seen as a compound term. [4.120.a] *Bhū* derives from

bhūta (that is, elements²⁵⁴) for, like the great elements, these levels serve as supports for the amassing of positive qualities. *Mi* derives from *amita* (immensity) since they are attained through an immensity of effort in meeting challenges. According to another interpretation, *bhū* derives from *abhaya* (fearlessness) since once one has attained these levels, one has dispensed with the five states of fear, for example. Alternatively, *bhū* derives from *bhūya[s]* (furthering) and so the term “level” implies something that serves as a support for one to proceed higher and higher, by going further on the basis of something that preceded it. In brief, then, the general derivation of the term “level” comes from using this word as a referent since these levels, similar to the earth as a foundation, serve as supports for positive qualities.

Analysis [4]

The analysis concerns ordinary individuals and spiritually advanced beings;
 the four ways in which attainment comes through intent,
 application, realization, and accomplishment;
 nonaccomplishment versus accomplishment;
 and pride, whether a good deal, little, or none.

Generally speaking, there are four ways of analyzing these levels: a distinction between those of ordinary individuals and spiritually advanced beings; an analysis on the basis of how the levels are attained; an analysis on the basis of how spiritual attainment comes about; and an analysis on the basis of the pride involved.

The first case has two divisions: the levels of ordinary individuals in the world and the levels that transcend this ordinary world.

The characteristics of the first kind of levels are such that these levels serve as supports for the qualities that permit one to proceed to the state of a spiritually advanced being. As for the underlying basis of what can be so characterized, it is appropriate to analyze this into the two further levels of (a) one who is a beginning practitioner and (b) one who practices with dedicated intent.

(a) The former is the case of those who experience the awakening of their spiritual potential for the Mahāyāna approach, from the point that they first arouse the motivation of bodhicitta up to and including

the circumstances of the path of accumulation since this is the process that matures their personal experience, which previously had not been matured.

(b) The latter level constitutes the circumstances of the path of linkage since they are simply developing a dedicated intent concerning the meaning of emptiness.

The characteristics of the second kind of levels (those that transcend this ordinary world) are such that these levels serve as supports for the qualities that are unique to spiritually advanced beings. As for the underlying basis of what can be so characterized, this constitutes the circumstances from the path of seeing to the path of consummation, [4.120.b] since the process is one of bringing one increasing familiarity with incorruptible meditative absorption, that is, with the timeless awareness of suchness that one had some direct realization of on the first bodhisattva level.

The second analysis is on the basis of how the levels are attained. This analysis includes four stages:

(a) the level attained through dedicated intent, which one gains by engaging in the teachings²⁵⁵ primarily through that dedicated intent;

(b) the level attained through one's conduct, by applying oneself, according to one's personal inclinations, to the ten kinds of spiritual practice;²⁵⁶

(c) the level attained through realization (that is, one's direct understanding of the actual nature of phenomena, from the first bodhisattva level onward); and

(d) the level of spiritual attainment (that is, one's progress in a spontaneous and effortless way from the eighth bodhisattva level onward).

As the *Ornament of the Sūtras* states:

As for the attainment of the levels,
this happens in four stages:
that of dedicated intent, that of engaging in pure conduct,
that of realization, and that of attainment of the levels.²⁵⁷

The third analysis is on the basis of how spiritual attainment comes. This is a fourfold analysis:

(a) In the context of the paths of accumulation and linkage, the level is one of practicing with dedicated intent, and spiritual attainment has not yet come about.

(b) In the context of the paths of seeing and meditation, the level is one of completely pure altruistic motivation, and spiritual attainment has nominally come about.

(c) However, as regards this attainment, from the first to the seventh bodhisattva level, concerted effort is involved, and from that point of view it can be said that attainment has not truly come about.

(d) Because there is no concerted effort involved from the eighth bodhisattva level onward, spiritual attainment has truly come about.

This can be gathered in the following passage from the same source:²⁵⁸

One should understand these levels all to be ones
in which spiritual attainment has or has not truly come about.
Even the ones in which there is attainment are held to be ones
in which it both has or has not come about.²⁵⁹

The fourth analysis is on the basis of the degree of pride involved. This is a threefold analysis:

(a) On the level of one practicing with dedicated intent, there is still a good deal of pride involved.

(b) On the first seven impure bodhisattva levels, there is more subtle pride involved.

(c) On the final three pure bodhisattva levels, there is no pride involved. As the same source states:

It is held that these involve a good deal of pride,
more subtle pride, or no pride.²⁶⁰

Distinctive Features [5]

The explanation of the distinctive features that are unique to the Mahāyāna approach has six topics: what the essential names for the levels are [4.121.a] and their derivation; the thorough training and upward progress involved; the spiritual practice and individual practitioners involved; the three trainings and the components of practice involved; the degree of purity and the processes of elimination and realization involved; and the specific qualities and states of rebirth involved.

Names and Their Derivation [a]

The Utterly Joyful One, The Immaculate One, The Illuminating One, The Radiant One,
 The One Who Meets the Challenge, The One Who Makes Evident,
 The One Who Has Gone Far, The Immutable One,
 The One of Brilliant Intelligence, The Cloud of Dharma— . . .

These are the names that refer to the bodhisattva levels, from the first to the tenth. As for their derivations:

(1) The first level is called that of “The Utterly Joyful One” because one’s seeing the significance of the actual nature of phenomena (which one had not seen previously) arouses in one an intense sense of joy. One sees that, as far oneself is concerned, one is approaching the sublime state of enlightenment, while as far as others are concerned, one can ensure benefit for beings on an enormous scale.

(2) The second level is called that of “The Immaculate One” because one has dispensed with violations of one’s discipline and ideas of following the Hīnayāna approach.

(3) The third level is called that of “The Illuminating One” because through the power of one’s meditative absorption one seeks countless spiritual teachings and then casts a great spiritual illumination on others.

(4) The fourth level is called that of “The Radiant One” because the fire of sublime intelligence that contributes to one’s enlightenment incinerates the two kinds of obscuration.

(5) The fifth level is called that of “The One Who Meets the Challenge” because when one brings beings to spiritual maturity, one does not react negatively to the perverse behavior of others but refines two factors that are difficult to refine (that is, the beings one is relating to and one’s own mind).

(6) The sixth level is called that of “The One Who Makes Evident” because one makes evident the equalness of conditioned existence and the state of peace²⁶¹ by relying on the transcendent perfection of sublime intelligence.

(7) The seventh level is called that of “The One Who Has Gone Far” because one is approaching the eighth bodhisattva level (called “the path that leads in only one direction”²⁶²), is already connected with it,

and has come to the final limit of having to apply oneself with deliberate effort.

(8) The eighth level is called that of “The Immutable One” because one is unmoved by deliberate ideas concerning either conceptual frameworks or the state that involves no such frameworks.

(9) The ninth level is called that of “The One of Brilliant Intelligence” because one has gained a noble intelligence that entails the four states of authentic discernment.²⁶³

(10) The tenth level is called that of “The Cloud of Dharma” because one’s meditative absorption and power of complete recall are compared to clouds, [4.121.b] which permeate the spacelike expanse of all the spiritual teachings that one has received from buddhas while one was on the first nine bodhisattva levels.

Such are the descriptive terms that are employed.

Thorough Training and Progress [b]

... with thorough training, one progresses in stages.

(1) One attains the first bodhisattva level through ten kinds of thorough training,²⁶⁴ such as that of contemplating all things without fickleness.

(2) In a similar way, one attains the second level through eight kinds of thorough training,²⁶⁵ such as that of observing discipline and expressing gratitude.

(3) One attains the third level through five kinds of thorough training,²⁶⁶ such as that of being insatiable in listening to teachings.

(4) One attains the fourth level through ten kinds of thorough training,²⁶⁷ such as that of dwelling in solitude.

(5) One attains the fifth level through ten kinds of thorough training,²⁶⁸ such as that of avoiding having connections with mundane people for personal gain or other selfish reasons.

(6) One attains the sixth level through twelve kinds of thorough training,²⁶⁹ such as that of training in perfecting generosity and the rest of the six factors and avoiding six other factors (such as yearning for the śrāvaka or pratyekabuddha approach).

(7) One attains the seventh level through twenty (or forty) kinds of thorough training,²⁷⁰ such as that of eliminating twenty factors (such as falsely imputing identity to things) and relying on twenty others that are

their opposites (such as gaining understanding of the three avenues to complete liberation²⁷¹).

(8) One attains the eighth level through eight kinds of thorough training,²⁷² such as that of understanding the behavior of all beings.

(9) One attains the ninth level through twelve kinds of thorough training,²⁷³ such as that of formulating limitless prayers of aspiration.

(10) One attains the tenth level through ten kinds of thorough training, such as that of using one's power of discernment to analyze in great detail all the things one has understood in the first nine levels.

This progress is referred to in *The Ornament of Manifest Realization*:

Through ten kinds of thorough training,
one attains the first level.

One employs the processes of contemplation and bringing
benefit . . .²⁷⁴

As for the way in which one progresses, one remains on any given level, from the first to the tenth, for as long as it takes to complete the thorough training specific to that level; once it has been completed, one progresses to the next highest level. [4.122.2] As the *Major Commentary on the Transcendent Perfection of Sublime Intelligence in Eight Thousand Verses* states:

One should understand that whatever kinds of thorough training are associated with whatever level, one is on that level until that training has been completed; once it has been thoroughly completed, one proceeds to another level.²⁷⁵

Spiritual Practice and Individual Practitioner [c]

One engages primarily in the specific transcendent perfections of the ten levels, generosity and so forth.

These entail pure view and discipline, meditative equipoise, an absence of preconceptions, attainment of intelligence, refinement, maturation, complete perfection, and empowerment.

From a bodhisattva on the first level (who practices primarily the transcendent perfection of generosity and engages in the remaining transcendent perfections in a peripheral manner), up to one on the tenth level (who practices primarily the transcendent perfection of timeless awareness and engages in the remaining perfections in a peripheral manner), the ten transcendent perfections are associated one-to-one with the ten levels. These ten are as described in *Distinguishing Center and Limit*:

Generosity, discipline, forbearance, diligence,
meditative stability, sublime intelligence, skillful means,
aspiration, spiritual power, and timeless awareness:
these are the ten transcendent perfections. . . .

. . . One should understand that these ten levels are distinguished by certain distinctive features and yet indistinguishable.²⁷⁶

(1) Thus, those who are on the first bodhisattva level are called “individual practitioners with a completely pure view” because they have realized the basic space of phenomena to be devoid of both kinds of identity.²⁷⁷

(2) In a similar way, those on the second level are called “those with completely pure discipline” because they are unsullied by even the slightest ethical flaw.

(3) Those on the third level are called “those resting utterly in meditative equipoise” because they have attained limitless states of meditative stability and absorption.

(4) Those on the fourth level are called “those without preconceptions concerning the separateness of phenomena” because they are without deeply ingrained fixations.

(5) Those on the fifth level are called “those without preconceptions concerning the separateness of their mental continuum” because they have gained evenness of mind.

(6) Those on the sixth level are called “those without preconceptions concerning the separateness of deeply ingrained afflictive states and complete enlightenment” because they experience these both as pure by their very nature. [4.122.b]

(7) Those on the seventh level are called “those who have attained the intelligence to meditate each and every moment on factors contributing to enlightenment” because they abide in the experience of what cannot be characterized.

(8) Those on the eighth level are called “those who are impartial and thoroughly refined” because they are truly spontaneous.

(9) Those on the ninth level are called “those who are skilled in bringing beings to spiritual maturity” because they have gained mastery of the four states of authentic discernment.

(10) Those on the tenth level are called “individual practitioners who have been empowered by all the buddhas” because they have attained levels of deeper discernment to an enormous degree. Therefore, they have completely perfected their physical bodies through meditative absorption and the power of complete recall, so that they are destined to cause emanations to manifest, residing in such realms as Tuṣita.²⁷⁸

The Three Higher Trainings and Components of Practice [d]

On six levels there are the three higher trainings, while on four the results of these are ensured.

With the realization of the actual nature of phenomena, five components of practice are successively refined.

On the first bodhisattva level, one trains in the causes leading to the three perfectly pure higher trainings. On the second level, one applies oneself to the higher training in discipline; on the third level, to that of mind; and on the fourth, fifth, and sixth levels, to that of sublime intelligence. Thus, one focuses in succession on factors that contribute to enlightenment, the Truths, and interdependent origination.

The results of these trainings are as follows: On the seventh level, timeless awareness of what cannot be characterized is ensured; on the eighth level, the spontaneously present experience of timeless awareness;²⁷⁹ on the ninth level, the spiritual maturation of all beings; and on the tenth level, all the supports for meditative stability and power of complete recall.

Once one has directly realized the actual nature of phenomena on the first level, on the second level one trains successively in the component of discipline; on the third level, in the component of meditative stability; on the fourth, fifth, and sixth levels, in the component of sublime intelligence; and on the seventh and higher levels, in the component of complete freedom from anything obscuring the four aforementioned results. On the level of buddhahood, there is total refinement of the component

of complete freedom from anything obscuring any possible object of knowledge, [4.123.a] as well as the component of the vision that is the liberated state of timeless awareness.

Purity, Elimination, and Realization [e]

Endowed with three causes, what is fundamentally positive becomes ever purer.

Cognitive obscurations are gradually eliminated, and ten aspects of timeless awareness are ensured.

Due to three causes (those of making offerings to the Three Jewels, bringing beings to complete spiritual maturity, and dedicating one's fundamentally positive qualities²⁸⁰ toward enlightenment) carried out over eons, from the first to the tenth levels these fundamentally positive factors become ever more completely purified. Analogies are used to describe the different degrees of purification that apply to the successive levels; one can learn about these in the sūtra the *Ten Spiritual Levels*.

As for the distinct states of elimination and realization that pertain to those on these levels, the 112 factors to be eliminated on the path of seeing are removed on that path, and those to be eliminated on the path of meditation are removed on that path. But when we discuss the ten levels, on these respective levels there are specific aspects of timeless awareness (that is, of realization concerning the basic space of phenomena) that successively eliminate the cognitive obscurations that are the counterproductive factors specific to any given level.

As well, the five states of fear are eliminated, as the sūtra the *Ten Spiritual Levels* states:

Immediately upon attaining this level,²⁸¹ one is free of the five kinds of fear:

free of the fear of being without livelihood, of death, of not being acknowledged,

of lower states of rebirth, and of one's retinue. One has no feelings of anxiety concerning these.

And why, one might ask? These no longer have any hold over one.²⁸²

And as the *Highest Continuum* states:

Spiritually advanced beings have thoroughly removed
the sufferings of death, illness, and aging.
Rebirth takes place due to the influence of karma and afflictive
states;
but because they are not subject to these, they are not subject to the
rest.²⁸³

Which is to say, one has eliminated the four “rivers of suffering.”²⁸⁴ In these and other ways, one has been freed from an inconceivable amount of fear. The point to be understood [4.123.b] is that these processes continue to increase from the first bodhisattva level to the tenth.

Even though one is freed from these four kinds of suffering, one manifests as though one were still not freed, which is to say one consciously takes rebirth in conditioned existence. As the same source states:

Because they perceive reality authentically, just as it is,
they have transcended birth and so forth;
nevertheless, through the power of their compassion
they demonstrate birth, death, illness, and aging.²⁸⁵

As concerns realization, in meditative equipoise, those on all ten levels realize the spacelike nature of phenomena (that is, the ultimate mode of reality, just as it is, free of the limitations of conceptual elaboration). In postmeditation, they realize the illusion-like quality of objects in the phenomenal world (that is, the relative mode of things in all their multiplicity, apparent yet lacking any independent nature of their own).

Other than the authenticity of this actual nature of phenomena, which is initially perceived on the path of seeing, there is no other kind of realization, nothing “new” to be seen; nevertheless, when we consider the distinctions between these ten levels, we can analyze ten aspects of realization as the certain knowledge that derives from eradicating false assumptions in the aftermath of factors to be eliminated having been removed.

(1) Thus, on the first level, one realizes that the actual nature of phenomena is omnipresent since one understands that the basic space of phenomena permeates every object of one’s experience.

(2) On the second level, one realizes that this nature is the most sub-

lime quality of all phenomena since one perceives that its nature is one of utter lucidity.

(3) On the third level, one realizes that the teachings that are given are completely in accord with one's realization.

(4) On the fourth level, one realizes that there is, in no way whatsoever, any tendency to invest experience with some "I" that has personal identity.

(5) On the fifth level, one realizes the fact that, within completely pure basic space, one's own mental continuum and those of others are not separate.

(6) On the sixth level, one realizes the fact that there are no longer any deeply ingrained afflictive states (since such distortions are adventitious) and that complete purity is nothing new (since things are pure by their very nature).

(7) On the seventh level, one realizes that the sūtras and other classes of spiritual teachings cannot be characterized such that they are separate from one another.

(8) On the eighth level, one realizes that afflictive states are diminishing (since one has gained a patient acceptance of the unborn aspect of phenomena), [4.124.a] that complete enlightenment does not evolve; in addition, one gains mastery of completely nonconceptual awareness (since the afflictive aspect of one's consciousness²⁸⁶ has been transmuted) and realizes the fact that one has mastery of pure realms of experience (since one's sense consciousnesses have been transmuted).

(9) On the ninth level, one realizes the fact that one has mastery of authentic discerning timeless awareness (since consciousness as the coordinating mental faculty has been transmuted).

(10) On the tenth level, one realizes the fact that one has mastery of enlightened activities, ensuring benefit for beings through one's emanations, just as is described in the teachings. These states of realization are spoken of in the *Ornament of the Sūtras* and *Distinguishing Center and Limit*.

In the foregoing cases, the factors to be eliminated are ten kinds of cognitive obscurations that do not involve afflictive states; thus, purely from the standpoint that one gains realization of these ten levels on the basis of the antidotes that eliminate those factors, some ten aspects of timeless awareness are assigned. Furthermore, these ten distinct aspects of realization pertain to postmeditation; there are no such distinctions with

respect to what one simply realizes in the context of meditative equipoise. And so, in the meditative equipoise associated with the first bodhisattva level, nonconceptual timeless awareness entails realization of the significance of all the aforementioned ten aspects (the all-pervasive quality of the actual nature of phenomena, and so forth) in toto; a similar situation applies to the other levels, from the second to the tenth. Nevertheless, the certainty one has in postmeditation is experienced in distinct ways. Thus, on the first level one experiences a certainty born from the realization of the significance of the actual nature of phenomena being all-pervasive; on the second level, one experiences a certainty born from the realization of the significance that this nature is most sublime; and so on. In these ways, these ten kinds of certain knowledge eliminate the cognitive obscurations.

Specific Qualities and States of Rebirth [f]

One gains qualities from the first level, with its twelve
hundredfold qualities,
to the tenth, where these qualities are as incalculable as the atoms
in the universe.

From the eighth level onward there are the ten kinds of controls
over longevity and so forth,
and on the tenth one receives the “empowerment of supreme
radiance.”

One takes rebirth through the power of karma, aspirations,
meditative absorption, and mastery.

Those abiding on these levels take rebirth, as a natural
consequence, as world rulers.

On the first bodhisattva level, one attains twelve hundredfold qualities, [4.124.b] which come into being each and every moment. These are mentioned in the “Chapter of the Bodhisattva Hayagrīva” from the sūtra the *Ten Spiritual Levels*²⁸⁷ and can be summarized in the following verses:

One gains (1) one hundred states of meditative absorption, and (2)
engages in these,
(3) beholds one hundred buddhas, (4) knows that one has received
their blessings,

- (5) causes one hundred worlds to quake, (6) journeys to one hundred realms,
- (7) illuminates these one hundred realms, (8) brings one hundred beings to spiritual maturity,
- (9) experiences one hundred eons,
- (10) is aware of one hundred previous and future lifetimes, (11) opens up one hundred avenues of spiritual teachings, and
- (12) manifests in one hundred forms, each of which is completely surrounded by a retinue of one hundred bodhisattvas.

In like fashion, on the second level, one gains such qualities a thousandfold; on the third, one hundred thousandfold; on the fourth, one billionfold; on the fifth, ten billionfold; on the sixth, one trillionfold; on the seventh, one hundred quintillionfold; on the eighth, to a degree equal to the number of atoms in one hundred thousand three-thousandfold universes; on the ninth, to a degree equal to the number of atoms in one million times ten to the sixtieth power three-thousandfold universes; and on the tenth, to a degree equal to, and even greater than, the number of atoms in an incalculably large number of a yet more incalculably large number of buddha realms.

It is also said that on the eighth level one acquires ten kinds of control. These ten are stated in the sūtra the *Complete Consolidation of Spiritual Teachings*:

You might ask, “What are the kind of control for bodhisattvas?” They are control over longevity, mind, material objects, activity, rebirth, miraculous powers, devoted intent, aspiration, timeless awareness, and phenomena. Such are the ten kinds of control.²⁸⁸

Of these:

- (1) the first control allows one to live at will for as many eons as one wishes;
- (2) the second gives one the capability of resting in equipoise, each and every moment, in countless states of meditative absorption;
- (3) the third gives one the capability, simply upon thinking of it, [4.125.a] of filling the universe with various kinds of food and material wealth;

(4) the fourth allows one to engage as one wishes in all aspects of the arts and other activities;

(5) the fifth allows one to take rebirth at will among gods or human beings;

(6) the sixth allows one to transform the entire earth into various kinds of jewels, for example (that is, to transform things into whatever one wishes, so that ordinary beings can actually see and use them);

(7) the seventh allows one to fulfill one's wishes, such as the intention that the entire universe be filled with buddhas;

(8) the eighth gives one the capability of emanating whatever one wishes, such as containing countless realms within the space on the tip of a single hair;

(9) the ninth grants one awareness of whatever object of knowledge one wishes to understand; and

(10) the tenth grants one wisdom in knowing all the classifications of phenomena with their specific names.

Generally speaking, the acquisition of these ten kinds of control takes place on the first seven impure bodhisattva levels, but the fuller expression of these ten takes place on the last three pure levels, while the completely pure degree of these is found on the level of buddhahood. So the statement that these ten kinds of control are first acquired on the eighth level is in accord with the statements found in the sūtras. The statement in the concise summary of the *Wheel of Time* entitled the *Sublimely Unchanging State*²⁸⁹ to the effect that these powers are acquired on the tenth level is made with the following intention: Once one has attained that tenth level and only a single rebirth remains to one,²⁹⁰ the capacity of these ten kinds of control reaches a consummate degree and one truly acquires them in the most complete sense.

In addition, on the tenth level one receives a special empowerment. The *Ornament of the Sūtras* states:

All buddhas confer the empowerment of supreme radiance;
this endows one completely with all the controls over phenomena.
One understands the ways in which buddhas manifest the
maṇḍalas of their retinues.

Having set the training in motion, one strives at annihilation and
nurturing.²⁹¹

In addition, the sūtras each speak of countless positive qualities in their respective presentations, [4.125.b] so that it is impossible to quantify these qualities in any definitive and exhaustive way.

As to how one who dwells on these levels takes rebirth, generally speaking bodhisattvas take rebirth in one of two ways: (1) through power or (2) through natural consequences.

(1) Rebirth through power is in one of four ways: (a) rebirth through karma, (b) rebirth through aspiration, (c) rebirth through meditative absorption, or (d) rebirth through mastery.

(a) The first alternative applies to bodhisattvas abiding on the level of engagement through firm conviction.

(b) The second alternative applies to those bodhisattvas dwelling on one of the ten levels who take rebirth as animals and other forms of life for the sake of others.

(c) The third alternative applies to those bodhisattvas dwelling in the realm of form who take rebirth in the realm of desire without straying from meditative absorption.

(d) The fourth alternative applies to those bodhisattvas who take rebirth for the sake of others through the avenue of emanations.

(2) As for rebirth through natural consequences, it is explained that bodhisattvas dwelling on the first level take rebirth, for the most part, as world rulers with dominion over the entire earth. In a similar way, those on the second level take rebirth as rulers with dominion over all four continents. Those on the third level take rebirth as Indra, with power over the realm of the Thirty-three Gods.²⁹² Those on the fourth level take rebirth as rulers over the Gods Free of Conflict.²⁹³ Those on the fifth level take rebirth as rulers over the Joyous Realm.²⁹⁴ Those on the sixth level take rebirth as rulers over the Gods Who Enjoy Emanations.²⁹⁵ Those on the seventh level take rebirth as rulers over the Gods Who Enjoy the Emanations of Others.²⁹⁶ Those on the eighth level take rebirth as Brahmā, ruler over a thousandfold universe. Those on the ninth level take rebirth as rulers over two-thousandfold universes. And bodhisattvas dwelling on the tenth level take rebirth as forms of the powerful lord Maheśvara, as rulers over the “immaculate abodes.”²⁹⁷

Definitive Rationale for Ten Spiritual Levels [6]

There is a definitive rationale for there being ten spiritual levels:

Although they are alike with respect to meditative equipoise,
 due to distinctions in the certain knowledge gained in
 postmeditation
 and the thorough training, there are definitely ten levels.

Concerning these ten levels in general, [4.126.a] there is no distinction with respect to meditative equipoise, which is that of nonreferential compassion²⁹⁸ and the realization that all phenomena are by nature emptiness. In postmeditation, however, there are ten distinct aspects of experience concerning the basic space of phenomena²⁹⁹ and the ten transcendent perfections³⁰⁰ in which one trains thoroughly. It is on the basis of these distinctions that we can analyze ten levels and arrive at this definitive enumeration.

In the context of this analysis of spiritual paths and levels, there is another point to be considered. “Under what circumstances,” one might ask, “do the paths and levels begin, whether these pertain to the śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, or bodhisattvas?” Clear discussions of this point are not found in most of the sūtras or tantras, but the *Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana* states:

On the level of practice with dedicated intent,
 with thorough cultivation of the three stages of the mind in
 meditation,
 the six transcendent perfections,
 and the four means of gathering students,³⁰¹
 make this level of dedicated intent without parallel.³⁰²

This passage explains that on the level of practice with dedicated intent, there are three stages of mind: as it enters into, abides in, and moves out of meditation. Of these, when the mind moves out of meditation, out of great compassion one engages in the six transcendent perfections and the four means of gathering students. Then, this source goes on to say, one passes from that level of dedicated intent and enters the paths of the

Mahāyāna approach. This interpretation should be taken to be the definitive statement on the matter.

The foregoing constitutes the commentary on the first part, concerning the paths and levels in the cause-based dialectical approach.

PART 2. THE LEVELS AND PATHS IN THE VAJRAYĀNA

- I. The Connection between Vajrayāna Meditation and the
Thirty-seven Factors
- II. The Special Nature of the Tantras and Oral Instructions
 - A. Intent of the Anuttarayoga Tantras
 - 1. The Path of Accumulation
 - 2. The Path of Linkage
 - a. Meditative Warmth
 - b. The Peak Experience
 - c. Patient Acceptance and the Highest Mundane Experience
 - 3. The Path of Seeing
 - 4. The Path of Meditation
 - 5. The Path of No More Training
 - B. The Kālacakra Tradition
 - 1. The Path of Accumulation
 - 2. The Path of Linkage
 - a. The Four Anticipatory Phases
 - b. The Levels of Meditative Absorption
 - 3. The Path of Seeing
 - a. The Actual Path of Seeing
 - b. The Distinctive Features of the Path of Seeing
 - 4. The Path of Meditation
 - 5. The Path of Consummation
- III. The Vajrayāna Traditions of Tibet
 - A. Preliminary Remarks
 - B. The Tibetan Schools of Vajrayāna
 - 1. Paths

- a. The Path of Accumulation
 - b. The Path of Linkage
 - c. The Path of Seeing
 - d. The Path of Meditation
 - e. The Path of No More Training
 - 2. Levels
 - a. Manifest Realization in the Levels
 - b. The Graduated Path
 - 3. Other Traditions
-

The second part concerns the paths and levels in the fruition-based Vajrayāna. This treatment has three topics: how the process of meditation is connected with the factors that contribute to enlightenment;³⁰³ the special nature of the tantras and oral instructions of accomplished masters; and the traditions of the most well-known early systems of Vajrayāna in the Land of Snows.

The Connection between Vajrayāna Meditation and the Thirty-seven Factors [I]

In the tantric approach, the ordinary methods of spiritual practice accord with those of the sūtra approach, while the more unique ones are those embellished by supreme bliss.

In the tradition of the secret mantra approach, or Vajrayāna, there are two presentations: the paths and levels pertaining primarily to the stage of development and the paths and levels pertaining primarily to the stage of completion. Without recourse to the latter presentation, [4.126.b] the former cannot set forth the paths and levels in their entirety, but if we explain the latter interpretation, the former is included as a matter of course, so we will proceed in this way.

In the Vajrayāna, the stages of the path that are connected with the common factors that contribute to enlightenment (to give one example, the applications of mindfulness that constitute the initial degree of the path of accumulation) are parallel to those found in the sūtra tradition.

As for the factors that are unique to the Vajrayāna tradition, it is that everything is to be “embellished by supreme bliss.”

Let us examine this principle by giving one example: In the initial degree of the path of accumulation, the four methods found in the approach of the Pāramitāyāna³⁰⁴ are the applications of mindfulness concerning the body, sensations, mind, and phenomena. Here one meditates on these with a special emphasis. In the first case, one focuses one's attention on mindfulness by using the framework of deity yoga,³⁰⁵ which involves the insight: “The nature of the body is one of bliss, and the essence of both body and bliss is one of emptiness.” This applies to the rest of the applications as well. Thus, in the second application, one focuses either on the simple bliss of meditative absorption (“The nature of the sensations that are felt as painful in light of confusion is that of the illuminating aspect of mind, and in essence that is supremely blissful”), or on the methods that induce “melting bliss.”³⁰⁶ In the third application, one understands, “Although all the avenues of consciousness associated with the senses are alike in that they are emptiness in essence, their nature is one of non-conceptual timeless awareness, which is the cause of supreme bliss.” And in the fourth application, one understands, “All manifestations on the physical level of the body and all states of ordinary mind are, in their essence, emptiness, but for those who fail to recognize these as such, they acts as causal factors that perpetuate confusion. Nevertheless, their nature remains that of supreme bliss.” In all of these cases one integrates one's awareness with the unity of bliss and emptiness.³⁰⁷

In this context, gurus of the past who were learned in the Cakrasaṃvara cycles³⁰⁸ spoke of sixteen gradations of the bliss that is integrated with emptiness, by referring to what they called the explanation according to pith instructions: (1) four gradations of joy associated with the stage of development, (2) four gradations associated with the stage of completion, (3) four gradations associated with the path, [4.127.a] and (4) four gradations associated with the fruition state—sixteen gradations that are “unrivalled.”³⁰⁹

(1) The first group of four consists of the following:

(a) the “joy” of meditating on the masculine and feminine deities in union;

(b) the “sublime joy” of engaging in union oneself, with either an actual consort or a visualized one;³¹⁰

(c) once that joy has reduced the ordinary thinking process to a subtle

level, the “joy beyond joy” of using visualization to cause thoughts to proliferate and resolve; and

(d) the “innate joy” of integrating one’s awareness of emptiness.

(2) The second group is associated with the well-known system of the four cakras,³¹¹ explained according to the following major and excellent interpretation:

(e) the “joy” of an externalized experience that is characterized as blissful;

(f) the “sublime joy” of an internalized experience of bliss;

(g) the “joy beyond joy” of the mind focusing on the bliss; and

(h) the “innate joy” that can be characterized as the integration of one’s awareness of emptiness.

Thus, in the context of the applications of mindfulness that constitute the initial degree of the path of accumulation, the foregoing are the eight aspects of bliss that are actually cultivated in meditation; the remaining eight aspects³¹² are still objects of one’s intention.³¹³

Let us discuss the significance of the accomplishment of these aspects in a way that is easy to understand. The four applications of mindfulness according to the sūtra tradition are as follows: their four objects (the body, and so forth)³¹⁴ are experienced as being impure and so forth on the relative level, while one meditates that on the ultimate level they cannot be found to exist in any way whatsoever. Thus, the process is, in essence, subsumed within meditation on the essential lack of the two kinds of identity.³¹⁵

The four applications of mindfulness according to the unsurpassable path³¹⁶ within the secret mantra tradition are as follows: In meditating on one’s body as the form of a deity, one integrates one’s awareness of the unity of bliss and emptiness, and in addition integrates this same awareness of bliss and emptiness concerning all sensations, aspects of ordinary consciousness, and mental events and objects of perception.³¹⁷

In the intermediate degree of the path of accumulation, the focus is on the four aspects of correct renunciation; in the final degree, the four bases of supernormal powers.

On the path of linkage, during the two phases of meditative warmth and the peak experience, the focus is on the five governing powers; during the two phases of patient acceptance and the highest mundane experience, the focus is on the five strengths. In all of these cases, the methods of meditation are for the most part parallel to the more common approach,³¹⁸

with the same distinctive feature in each case, that is, the object of emptiness expressing itself as supreme bliss.

(3) The governing powers and strengths of meditative absorption [4.127.b] both constitute supremely blissful timeless awareness, while those of sublime intelligence constitute timeless awareness of emptiness while focusing within that framework. The focus for both these aspects of awareness is one's mindful recollection of the form of the deity, which is an expression of the nonduality of manifest appearance and emptiness. The bliss in this context constitutes the four aspects of joy associated with the path. These are as follows:

(i) "joy" is the bliss that comes from the subsiding of more obvious states of perception that reify sense objects as something external;

(j) "sublime joy" is the bliss that comes from the subsiding of more obvious states of fixation on internal experiences;

(k) "exceptional joy"³¹⁹ is the bliss that comes from the subsiding of more obvious states of reifying ordinary mind and mental states; this is the blissful meditative absorption associated with the five governing powers (the realizations entailed by these first three gradations of joy develops in stages); and

(l) the innate aspect of supreme bliss comes from the subsiding of the eighty overt patterns of thought,³²⁰ due to the simultaneous subsiding of all the more obvious states of dualistic perception; this is inwardly directed meditative absorption associated with the five powers.

On the path of seeing, all seven aids to enlightenment are, in essence, this unity of bliss and emptiness. In particular, thorough pliancy³²¹ leads to all the force of the subtle channels, subtle energies, and bindu being drawn into the central channel, bringing about the bliss that comes from transmuting the refined essence of the subtle channels and elements that are subsumed within the cakras of the subtle body.

(4) Meditative absorption constitutes the four aspects of joy associated with the fruition state; this is the blissful meditative absorption that comes from the removal of the possibility for any of the eighty overt patterns of thought. Sublime intelligence constitutes timeless awareness as the ground of emptiness; since it is free of all conceptual elaboration, it is identical in essence with the bliss. It is experienced in both the presence and absence of any given manifestation in one's perception.

On the path of meditation, of the branches of the eightfold path of noble ones, the authentic view³²² is that of emptiness that entails all

possibilities.³²³ Meditative absorption³²⁴ is the enlightened embodiment of the deity, which expresses the unity of bliss and emptiness revealed by the transmutation of the subtle channels and elements in the remaining places of the body.³²⁵ Three branches (effort,³²⁶ livelihood,³²⁷ and ethical choices³²⁸) primarily entail, in their essence, [4.128.a] the three aspects of conduct.³²⁹ Mindfulness³³⁰ constitutes mindfulness that has the function of causing the three successive steps of subtle experience³³¹ to resolve in basic space. Thought³³² and speech³³³ play similar roles to the foregoing.

The foregoing explanations are according to the intent of the learned and accomplished masters of the holy country of India, as interpreted by the most important masters who upheld the Cakrasaṃvara tradition, such as Purang Lochung³³⁴ and Malgyo.³³⁵ So even though the *Well-Sealed Locket* does not treat these as anything other than simply principles from the ordinary teachings,³³⁶ do not entertain any qualms that I might have fabricated them myself.

The truly extraordinary interpretation of the thirty-seven factors that contribute to enlightenment is that of the timeless awareness that comes from some thirty-seven aspects of the subtle channels, subtle energies, and bindu being purified within the central channel. This becomes fully evident in the context of the fruition state.

The Special Nature of the Tantras and Oral Instructions [II]

This discussion has two sections: the enlightened intent common to the tantras of the Anuttara class³³⁷ and the specific tradition associated with the Kālacakra cycle.

Intent of the Anuttarayoga Tantras [A]

The first section of the discussion has five topics: the path of accumulation; the path of linkage; the path of seeing; the path of meditation; and the path of no more training.

The Path of Accumulation [1]

In particular, one invokes timeless awareness by meditating on the stages of development and completion.

In the initial degree of the path of accumulation, meditative equipoise consists of these two stages, while in postmeditation benefit is ensured by applying the methods of the tantras.³³⁸

In the intermediate degree, meditation does not falter, even in dreams, while one gains the final degree through the realization that brings one mastery of timeless awareness.

Using the four applications of mindfulness, one meditates energetically on the two stages of development and completion, gaining some small measure of clarity in visualizing a rough image of the maṇḍala. Once there awakens in one the realization that comes from invoking timeless awareness (something that other spiritual approaches are incapable of rivaling),³³⁹ one has gained the initial degree of the path of accumulation. One then practices the two stages in meditative equipoise, while in postmeditation one benefits other beings by applying the methods of the tantras.

Due to one's cultivating the four aspects of correct renunciation, one can maintain meditation on the two stages (even in postmeditation activities, deep sleep, and dreams), so that it becomes an ongoing flow, while the clarity of one's visualization increases to include finer details; [4.128.b] one has gained the intermediate degree of the path of accumulation.

Then, relying on the four bases of supernormal powers, one practices energetically and one-pointedly on the form of the deity and the meditative absorption of bliss and emptiness. The clarity of one's visualization increases to an even greater degree, so that one is able to see the face of the deity, can effect various activities associated with the practice without impediment, and becomes capable of gaining the main kinds of more common states of spiritual attainment. When the realization that brings one mastery of timeless awareness thus awakens in one, one has gained the final degree of the path of accumulation.

Then, by one's exerting oneself solely in the practice of the two stages, the five levels of deeper discernment gradually arise, deriving from one's experience of the unity of bliss and emptiness. If one then pursues the more common spiritual attainments as short-term goals, one gains a degree of "warmth"³⁴⁰ in this regard and can engage in the appropriate conduct. One can attain the state of a master of awareness through

material means³⁴¹ (with these five levels of deeper discernment and the eight spiritual attainments, for example) or that of a master of awareness in a physical body³⁴² (such as a master of awareness in the realm of desire³⁴³ or a master of awareness in the realm of form). But this kind of conduct, based as it is on the intention to gain more common states of spiritual attainment, acts as an impediment to the more sublime spiritual attainment,³⁴⁴ and one can not gain that sublime attainment within the span of an ordinary human lifetime. However, because one gains mastery of longevity, one can gradually awaken to buddhahood in that same physical form.³⁴⁵

The Path of Linkage [2]

The discussion of the second path has three topics: meditative warmth; the peak experience; and patient acceptance and the highest mundane experience.

Meditative Warmth [a]

Striving at practicing the stage of completion, through the realization associated with the three successive steps of subtle experience,
one gains the meditative warmth of the path of linkage; . . .

Having already attained the four bases of supernormal powers, those who wish for sublime spiritual attainment to come swiftly will, for the time being, not engage in conduct for the sake of the more common spiritual attainments. They may meditate on some appropriate method of the stage of development, but regardless of whether they do or not they strive at practicing the stage of completion. Due to the circumstances of subtle energy and mind dissolving into the avadhūti channel,³⁴⁶ one experiences states of realization, variously described as three degrees (lesser, intermediate, and greater) of timeless awareness whose nature is that of the unity of bliss and emptiness, or the three successive steps of subtle experience, or the first aspects of joy associated with the path. When such realization awakens in one, [4.129.a] this is considered to be the awakening of realization associated with the three degrees (lesser, intermediate, and greater) of meditative warmth on the path of linkage.

At this point, there is no certainty that one must rely on the practice of karmamudrā.³⁴⁷ The final limit of the greatest degree of meditative warmth on the path of linkage is that of the greatest degree of “complete attainment,” also known as the utter lucidity of the consummate isolation of mind³⁴⁸ (which is an aspect of the gradation of exceptional joy), or the consummate step that foreshadows the actual state of utter lucidity. Once one has achieved that (that is, once the experiences associated with the progressive dissolution of the elements³⁴⁹ occur just as they would in the state of utter lucidity at the time of death), one “engages in conduct,”³⁵⁰ or failing that at least one should rely on a mudrā consort. But the realization associated with the lesser degree of meditative warmth is that of the stage of completion, and until this at least has awakened, it is inappropriate for one to engage in the conduct associated with the stage of completion because this would delay the achievement of an enlightened embodiment of timeless awareness to some extent.³⁵¹

The Peak Experience [b]

The second phase includes two points: the general process of the peak experience and an analysis of the divisions within this. Concerning the first point, the source verses state:

... through the practice of karmamudrā comes the greatest degree of complete attainment.

The consummate experience that foreshadows the actual state of utter lucidity is a constant presence.

On the basis of that, one's subtle energy and mind are realized in the embodiment of the deity: this is the peak experience.

Until the eighty overt patterns of thought have been eliminated, ...

Once one has gained the greater degree of meditative warmth, one energetically practices the yoga of karmamudrā, gaining the greatest degree of “complete attainment,” that is, the consummate experience that foreshadows the actual state of utter lucidity. Immediately upon one arising from meditation within the constant presence of that state, an enlightened embodiment is achieved that is simply the unity of one's subtle energy and mind. Having achieved this, one has entered the peak experience on the path of linkage.

Then, due to the yoga of karmamudrā, one's impure physical body is

transformed into a more subtle and refined state. Once this has merged in one's experience with the enlightened embodiment that is simply the unity of subtle energy and mind, this is termed "the vajra embodiment of the rainbow body," or "master of awareness." This is not considered to be a body within any of the three realms.³⁵² However, since one lacks direct experience of the actual nature of phenomena, one is not yet considered a master of awareness who has transcended the ordinary world. And even though the enlightened embodiment that is simply the unity of subtle energy and mind may have been achieved, if the gross physical body has not yet been transformed, it is not considered the enlightened embodiment of a master of awareness. [4.129.b] But once what is termed "the enlightened embodiment of nondual timeless awareness" has been achieved, it is impossible for the gross physical body not to be transformed; and so the enlightened embodiment of primordial unity constitutes that of a master of awareness who has transcended the ordinary world.

In any case, with the achievement of the enlightened embodiment that is simply the unity of subtle energy and mind, until the eighty overt patterns of thought are eliminated this constitutes the peak experience on the path of linkage, and the clear image of the maṇḍala manifests uninterruptedly in one's perception.

... one trains in the twenty-four sacred sites and joins the
gathering of vajra heralds,
and so the subtle elements of *pūjā o a* are arrested
within the central channel: this is the first level on the path of
linkage.

Once the enlightened embodiment that is simply the unity of subtle energy and mind has been achieved, one can experience these twenty-four major sacred sites in the outer world and joins the special gathering of the vajra heralds³⁵³ dwelling in these sites. On the inner level, the subtle elements and energies are arrested within the central channel, and so one successively traverses ten levels that can be distinguished within the path of linkage itself.

In this regard, there are four sites: Pullira-malaya at the forehead, Jālandhara at the crown of the head, Oḍḍiyāna in the right ear, and Arbuda at the nape of the neck. The subtle potentials of the channels,

energies, and bindus associated with these sites dissolve into the central channel and are arrested within it, awakening the realization that is the first level on the path of linkage.

In a similar manner, there are secondary sites—Go, Ra, De, Ma, Kā, O, Tri, Ko, Ka, Lam, Kā, Hi, Pre, Gr̥, Sau, Su, Na, Si, Ma, and Ku—known as Domain, Inner Domain, Intent, Inner Intent, Gathering, Inner Gathering, Charnel Ground, and Inner Charnel Ground; these points in the body are purified in pairs. One traverses ten levels.

Quenching of Thirst and Inner Quenching of Thirst are assigned to the enlightened embodiment of timeless awareness on the path of seeing. . . .

The same process of arrest described previously applies in the following cases. The four secondary sacred sites are: Godāvarī in the left ear, Rameśvara at the mid-brow point, Devikoṭa in both eyes, and Māllava on the shoulders. These allow one to traverse to the second level. [4.130.a] Kāmarūpa in the armpits and Oṭe on the two breasts are associated with the third level; Triśakune at the navel and Kosala in the nose, with the fourth level; Kaliṅga in the mouth and Lampāka in the middle of the throat, with the fifth level; Kāñci in the heart and Himāla in the secret channel, with the sixth level; Pretapuri in the genitals and Gr̥hadeva in the anus, with the seventh level; Saurāṣṭra in the thighs and Suvarṇadvīpa in both calves, with the eighth level; Nagara in the nails and Sindhu in the ankles, with the ninth level; and Maru in both large toes and Kuluha in the knees, with the tenth level. These pairs are referred to, respectively, by the names Domain, Inner Domain, Intent, Inner Intent, Gathering, Inner Gathering, Charnel Ground, and Inner Charnel Ground. As was just explained, in these sacred sites of the body (paired together), the subtle channels, subtle energies, and bindu are purified within the central channel, so that the realization associated with the respective level awakens, and one traverses these ten levels in succession. Following these levels, the sites Quenching of Thirst and Inner Quenching of Thirst are assigned to the attainment of the enlightened embodiment of nondual timeless awareness on the path of seeing.

Patient Acceptance and the Highest Mundane Experience [c]

Concerning the third point, the verses state:

... At that point, in both meditative equipoise and post-meditation,
due to the conduct of the ongoing cycle of bliss and emptiness,
that of the consort, one gains patient acceptance. With the
awakening of manifest timeless awareness,
there is the highest mundane experience. . . .

When one is engaging in the conduct of the peak experience, in both meditative equipoise and postmeditation, one primarily cultivates the unity of bliss and emptiness that constitutes the path of the mudrā consort, and later on enjoys oneself through the conduct of the group practice of the gaṇacakra ritual.³⁵⁴ Principally, one cultivates the five governing powers in meditation, so that the eighty overt patterns of thought subside and one gains patient acceptance on the path of linkage. Then, once manifest timeless awareness³⁵⁵ (the direct cause³⁵⁶ of the experience of the ultimate state of utter lucidity) has awakened, one gains the highest mundane experience. During these two phases, one principally cultivates the five powers.

The Path of Seeing [3]

... The third step is that of innate awareness;
one uninterruptedly perceives the ultimate state of utter lucidity.
[4.130.b]

One has received the empowerment into nirmāṇakāya and
eliminated the potential for ordinary thought.

The enlightened embodiment of nondual timeless awareness is
achieved.

The highest mundane experience entails three steps: those of the three successive steps of manifestation, increase, and attainment. The third step is termed “innate awareness in the context of the path”; it is the consummate degree to which innate awareness can be experienced within the sphere of this ordinary world. Generally speaking, one has attained

innate awareness on the path, in the sense that the eighty overt patterns of thought have dissolved. From this third step onward, when the path of seeing then dawns with the uninterrupted perception of the ultimate state of utter lucidity, one has received the empowerment into *nirmāṇakāya* and eliminated the potential for the eighty overt patterns of thought.

On this path one cultivates the seven aids to enlightenment, and immediately upon one's arising from that third step, the enlightened embodiment of nondual timeless awareness is achieved.

The Path of Meditation [4]

The factors eliminated on the path of meditation are analyzed into nine degrees of the three successive steps of subtle experience, lesser and greater.

With progressive elimination, the most subtle aspects of mind, mental events, and the mind-body aggregates, sense fields, and components of perception are transformed. . . .

What transpires once the enlightened embodiment of timeless awareness has been achieved constitutes the path of meditation, and the levels of this constitute, in essence, timeless awareness endowed with seven attributes of integration,³⁵⁷ as the foundation for superior qualities. It is impossible for one to become separated from timeless awareness as the unity of bliss and emptiness, and the enlightened embodiment of timeless awareness is an uninterrupted continuum, so that the embodiment and timeless awareness are considered to constitute a primordial unity. On the ten bodhisattva levels, one cultivates the eightfold path of noble ones, engages in conduct in one's direct experience, and brings incalculable benefit to beings through one's emanations, thus perfecting the realization of each respective level very swiftly. Eventually, one fully experiences the state of the great Vajradhara.

The factors to be eliminated on the path of meditation can be analyzed into nine degrees, lesser and greater, of the three successive steps of subtle experience; thus, one eliminates these factors through the remaining nine levels.³⁵⁸ All aspects of ordinary mind and all mental events are transformed. The nature of all ordinary mental events is identified as being that of the three successive steps of subtle experience, and other than the

specific means of elimination, the remaining aspects of the transformation process are similar to those of the common approach.³⁵⁹

Although the more obvious aspects of the mind-body aggregates, sense fields, and components of perception [4.131.a] have already been transformed, here even the most subtle aspect of these is transformed. The qualities of these bodhisattva levels should be understood to correspond to those described in the part on the common approach.

In this regard, the twelve levels described in the section on meditative absorption from the tantra the *Wheel of Time* and the twelve described in the Path and Fruition cycle should be understood to be the same twelve levels described above in the context of the path of linkage.³⁶⁰

*The Path of No More Training [5]*³⁶¹

... At the final limit of the continuum of this path,
one receives empowerment from the sambhogakāya. There is no
more training.

At the final limit of this continuum, the path of meditation, one is empowered by the sambhogakāya, which brings one to the consummate path of no more training. In the circumstances of ordinary individuals, there are many who fully experience the consummation that foreshadows the actual state of utter lucidity through the agency of an empowerment they receive. But the particular case in question depends on the path of seeing as a factor contributing to manifest enlightenment and the definitive empowerment that takes place when one awakens to buddhahood.

In this regard, empowerment is conferred by the sambhogakāya buddha Vajradhara and the rest of the buddhas throughout the limitless range of the ten directions. With the conferral of such an empowerment, the vajralike samādhi (the final limit of the continuum of sublime intelligence and timeless awareness that lies at the very threshold of enlightenment) eliminates even the most subtle habitual patterns of change.³⁶² With the transformation of the basis of all ordinary experience, in the next moment one awakens to actual buddhahood. It is at this point that the aspects of manifest enlightenment and the excellent array of offerings associated with these occur, together with other auspicious signs.

“Well,” one might object, “isn’t the explanation of the factors contrib-

uting to manifest enlightenment given in the tantras concerned with the path of seeing?" While it is indeed the case that the explanations of the signs of attainment experienced by a practitioner relying on a consort constitute just such an explicit description, what occurs at this present point we are discussing is far more vast—infinite, even—in scope than the former. [4.131.b]

The Kālacakra Tradition [B]

The second part of the discussion, concerning the specific tradition associated with the Kālacakra cycle, also has five topics: the path of accumulation; the path of linkage; the path of seeing; the path of meditation; and the path of consummation.

The Path of Accumulation [1]

In the Kālacakra tradition, through the stage of development and the process of consolidation, one traverses the final degree of the path of accumulation. . . .

The most majestic of all texts in the tantra class is that of the glorious tantra *The Wheel of Time*. According to the extraordinary tradition that is unique to this cycle, the pathway of the central channel is purified to some degree through one's practice of the stage of development (focusing on the deity with retinue) and the branch of "consolidation."³⁶³ One gains mastery of the abiding quality of mind, so that thoughts do not cause interruptions and the ten indications of utter lucidity are experienced for the first time.³⁶⁴ If one pursues this process with stability in practicing the stage of development, one gains the final degree of the path of accumulation according to the tantric interpretation.

The Path of Linkage [2]

The discussion of the second path has two topics: an explanation of the four phases on the path of linkage that anticipate the decisive breakthrough, and a specific presentation of the levels of meditative absorption.³⁶⁵

The Four Anticipatory Phases [a]

... Meditative stability brings one to meditative warmth.

Harnessing and channeling subtle energy brings one to the intermediate degree; attention, to the greater degree.

Recollection brings one to the peak experience, and meditative absorption to patient acceptance and the highest mundane experience.

Through the branch of meditative stability, the pathway of the central channel becomes thoroughly pliant, so that one understands one's own mind, the empty forms of the deities, and all perceptions that manifest due to one's karma to be inseparable in their nature, which is free of conceptual elaboration. The aforementioned ten indications become stable in one's experience, taking on even more significance than before. Once individuals who have gained stability in the stage of development have brought this branch to a consummate level, they have gained the first degree of meditative warmth on the path of linkage, whereas those who still have not gained stability in the stage of development, if they meditate and bring this to consummation, have simply come to the initial degree of the path of accumulation in the tantric context.

Next, due to the branch of harnessing and channeling subtle energy, the ten subtle energies dissolve in the central channel, which arrests the overt thought patterns based on dualistic perceptions of object and subject as separate from one another. One gains miraculous powers, levels of deeper discernment, and so forth, which give one some degree of mastery of the outer and inner elements,³⁶⁶ [4.132.2] so that one then has some slight degree of spiritual power. The warmth of *caṇḍalī*³⁶⁷ blazes to some small extent, so that one clearly experiences the unity of bliss and emptiness. Whether one has previously gained stability in practicing the stage of development or not, through this branch one will gain it by the time one comes to the intermediate, or even the lesser degree of meditative warmth.

Through the branch of attention, all the limitless aspects of subtle energy dissolve into those of bindu within the central channel, so that the warmth of *caṇḍalī* blazes uninterruptedly, in and of itself. One's spiritual power and qualities are magnified anywhere from ten to one hundred times more than before. Once the timeless awareness associated with the

greater degree of meditative warmth has awakened in one, this provides the link to the peak experience.

The branch of recollection ensures that the enlightened embodiment of nondual timeless awareness is achieved to a small degree. The warmth of caṇḍālī blazes with extra force, ushering in the four aspects of joy associated with the undiminishing process of melting bliss.³⁶⁸ The more obvious expressions of afflictive states are eliminated. This brings one to the consummate degree of the peak experience.

The branch of meditative absorption brings patient acceptance and the highest mundane experience. The subtle energies of karma are arrested, bindu is stabilized: in these and other ways, this is the process that ensures the actual elimination of the three avenues of body, speech, and mind that constitute the state of saṃsāra.

The Levels of Meditative Absorption [b]

On this path there are twelve lower, or conceptually designated, levels.

At that point, beginning with aging and death back to ignorance, the twelve links and their attendant subtle energies are arrested.

With each group of three, one of the situations of ordinary body, speech, mind, and thought patterns based on attachment is eliminated.

The four vajras of the path are accomplished. The eleventh level brings patient acceptance, the twelfth the highest mundane experience, . . .

In this branch of meditative absorption, the first level is ensured by the first half of the cakra in the secret center filling with the nectar of unchanging bodhicitta; the second level, by the filling of the remaining half; and so on, with the same process applying to the other five cakras,³⁶⁹ so that the twelfth level is ensured by the filling of the remaining half of the cakra at the crown of the head, so that the entire crown of the head is stabilized. The next step involves what is termed “the achievement of the enlightened embodiment of nondual timeless awareness.” [4.132.b] Of the two kinds of levels (conceptually designated and actual, or lower and higher), one has gained the twelve lower, or conceptually designated, levels.³⁷⁰

In this context, the twelve links of interdependent origination,³⁷¹ together with their attendant subtle energies, are arrested, beginning with aging and death (on the first level) up to ignorance. With each group of three links, one of the situations of ordinary body, speech, mind, and thought patterns based on attachment is eliminated. This ensures the accomplishment of the four vajras in the context of the path.

Let me explain this in more detail. Aging and death are arrested on the first level of meditative absorption, birth on the second level, and becoming³⁷² on the third level; this eliminates the experience of the ordinary body and ensures the form vajra³⁷³ in the context of the spiritual path. Perpetuation³⁷⁴ is arrested on the fourth level, compulsion³⁷⁵ on the fifth level, and sensation³⁷⁶ on the sixth level; this eliminates the experience of ordinary speech and ensures the speech vajra³⁷⁷ in the context of the spiritual path. Contact³⁷⁸ is arrested on the seventh level, the sense fields³⁷⁹ on the eighth, and the formation of the mind-body complex³⁸⁰ on the ninth; this eliminates the experience of ordinary mind and ensures the mind vajra³⁸¹ in the context of the spiritual path. Ordinary consciousness³⁸² is arrested on the tenth level, formative patterning³⁸³ on the eleventh, and ignorance on the twelfth; this eliminates the fourth situation of ordinary experience, that of thought patterns based on attachment, and ensures the timeless awareness vajra³⁸⁴ in the context of the spiritual path.

Thus, on these levels there occurs what those who proceed developmentally³⁸⁵ term “the accomplishment of the four vajras,” but this actually refers to the fact that the causes for these accomplishments are being gathered together in their entirety. As for the elimination of the experiences of ordinary body, speech, and mind and of thought patterns based on attachment, and the arresting of the twelve links, it is acceptable to use the term “arrest” to designate a process involving, for example, the dissolving of the causes and subtle energies associated with these links. However, since the final step of the branch of meditative absorption constitutes the path of seeing, it is at that point that these links are actually arrested all at once, for the potentials for these have been eliminated. Although it is indeed the case that, simultaneous with these events, the four vajras are attained, the particular ways in which these events express their functions occur immediately upon one’s moving beyond the step of the path of seeing,³⁸⁶ [4.133.a] and so it is at that point that the conventional designation of “attaining” can be used.

Therefore, the first eleven levels of the branch of meditative absorption

constitute patient acceptance on the path of linkage, while the first 1,799 “moments” of the twelfth level constitute the highest mundane experience on the path of linkage.

The Path of Seeing [3]

The discussion of the third path also has two topics: the actual path of seeing, and the distinctive features of the levels (or timeless awareness) on this path.

The Actual Path of Seeing [a]

... while the final moment constitutes the path of seeing, the enlightened embodiment of timeless awareness.

In the final moment of the 1,800 moments that make up the highest mundane experience on the path of linkage, the path of seeing of a spiritually advanced being awakens in one’s experience. The experiences of body, speech, and mind that pertain to saṃsāra, and the thought patterns based on attachment, have already been eliminated. In the step following this, the enlightened embodiment of nondual timeless awareness (that is, the form, speech, mind, and timeless awareness vajras, which by nature constitute a state of primordial unity) is fully experienced.

Thus, when the experiences of ordinary body, speech, and mind that pertain to saṃsāra are eliminated, all the other aspects of the mind-body aggregates are transformed. Under those circumstances, the expression “the accomplishment of the vajrakāya, the rainbow body” is used since the impure experience of ordinary body has been transformed; as well, the expression “the accomplishment of the enlightened embodiment of nondual timeless awareness” is used since what has been gained is the experience of the “equal taste” of the four vajras.³⁸⁷

Given that what is actually taking place here is the first bodhisattva level of The Utterly Joyful One, due to the path of the secret mantra approach being extremely direct, one finds other terms, such as “buddhahood itself,” “perfect buddhahood,” and even the name “Vajrasattva,” also being used to describe this level. There are various reasons for this: one is extremely close to perfect buddhahood itself; henceforth, there remains only the attainment of buddhahood through similar kinds of paths;

this path accords in principle with perfect buddhahood itself; and this path constitutes the completion of the steps associated with unchanging bliss.

The Distinctive Features of the Path of Seeing [b]

At that point, this serves as the foundation for superior qualities,
[4.133.b]

these special levels being those of “Total Illumination,” “Nectar,”
“Space,”

the lights of “Vajra,” “Jewel,” and “Lotus,” “Activity,”

“Incomparable,” “Endowed with Metaphor,” “Light of Sublime
Intelligence,” “Omniscience,”

and “Pure Discerning Awareness.” These twelve are attained
simultaneously.

These are distinct aspects that remain present until buddhahood.

Once the vajrakāya has been accomplished, it serves as the foundation for superior qualities, and so there is also the attainment of twelve distinctive features of timeless awareness that are given the names of levels. An enumeration of these is given in the section on timeless awareness from the *Sublimely Unchanging State*:

... similarly, there are the following:

the level “Total Illumination, the Lovely and Supreme Orb of the
Sun”;

the level “Light of Nectar, the Clear Light of the Supreme Moon”;

the level “Light of Space, Abiding Totally Like Space”;

the level “Vajra Light, Delighting the Mind”;

the level “Jewel Light, Abiding as the Actual Conferral of
Empowerment”;

the level “Lotus Light, Completely Upholding the Flawless State
Pure by Its Very Nature”;

the level “Enacting the Activity of Buddhahood”;

the level “Incomparable”;

the level “Ensuring Total Realization of the Metaphor of All
Metaphors”;

the level “Unsurpassable Light of Sublime Intelligence”;

the level “Omniscience Itself, the Supreme State of Utter
 Lucidity”;
 and the level “Merging with Genuine Awareness, the Epitome of
 Self-Knowing Discernment.”³⁸⁸

These levels are primarily discussed in “The Section on the Qualities of the Tathāgata.” However, because they are attained simultaneously at the conclusion of the twelfth level of meditative absorption,³⁸⁹ these twelve levels are all complete, just like the individual bodhisattva levels of The Utterly Joyful One and the rest.

As well, all twelve pertain to perfect buddhahood. The qualities of buddha nature and the actual nature of phenomena, which are inseparable by nature, are timelessly and spontaneously perfect. So these twelve levels of Total Illumination and so forth (which constitute the process whereby the capacity to realize this or that aspect of these qualities is developed) [4.134.a] are subsumed within the process that eliminates obscurations. As well, in the context of the path of training followed by spiritually advanced beings, each of these levels has, in its entirety, a complete range of both meditative equipoise and postmeditation.³⁹⁰ The twelve levels associated with buddhahood are attained in the sense that these primordial levels of being become fully evident; they are not subsumed within the path, nor are these cases of something new coming into being.

Concerning these levels, the tantra the *Adornment of the Vajra Heart Essence* states:

The supreme level of Total Illumination
 is itself comparable to the orb of the sun . . .³⁹¹

Concerning the significance of this passage, it is indeed true that some learned masters of Tibet interpreted it to refer solely to the levels associated with buddhahood, while others interpreted it to refer to the twelve levels of the path of spiritually advanced beings, while still others interpreted it to refer to the twelve levels associated with the Six Branches of Union from the Kālacakra cycle.³⁹² But in what appears to be a dissenting interpretation that contradicts each of the foregoing interpretations, the learned and accomplished masters of India and the great and venerable master of the Jonang tradition³⁹³ explain this passage as follows:

The number twelve is arrived at by analyzing distinct aspects of the

state of primordial unity (the timeless awareness that constitutes the path of spiritually advanced beings), while the term “level” is used due to this awareness’s serving as the foundation for superior qualities. In their respective order, these twelve aspects are:³⁹⁴

- (1) the dispelling of the darkness of the ignorance imposed by cognitive obscurations;
- (2) the reshaping of desire through undiminishing bliss;
- (3) the perception of all phenomena as being like space;
- (4) a stable altruistic motivation that takes delight in the welfare of others since it cannot be undermined by self-centered thoughts;
- (5) timeless awareness that is empowered by one’s chosen deity;³⁹⁵
- (6) the perception that mind is pure by its very nature;
- (7) the enacting of enlightened activity by emanating buddhas and so forth through the power of aspiration;
- (8) the perception of what is ineffable, that is, timeless awareness, which is beyond any comparison;
- (9) the realization of the analogies and underlying reasons for all phenomena;
- (10) the unfolding of unsurpassable intelligence concerning all knowable objects;
- (11) the dispelling of habitual patterns associated with the darkness of cognitive obscurations; and
- (12) the full experience of self-knowing and discerning timeless awareness. [4.134.b]

The Path of Meditation [4]

Next is the path of meditation: the level of Abode, or The Utterly Joyful One, and the rest.

Since the transcendent branches are in equal measure, one traverses, just as one wishes, the levels that are the supreme higher context.

Immediately in the wake of one’s having attained the path of seeing, from that point onward one cultivates the six transcendent branches in meditation equally, following the path of meditation through the levels of “Abode” and the rest (that is, the level of The Utterly Joyful One and the other levels). And one is engaged in the spiritual deportment of pure

awareness, conduct whose nature is inconceivable to the ordinary mind, thus bringing countless beings to spiritual maturity and freedom. While doing all of this, one traverses these twelve levels and the supreme higher, or actual, context they constitute.

The Path of Consummation [5]

The consummation is the swift attainment of the actual state of Vajrasattva.

This especially exalted tradition is the presentation of the Great Venerable One.

As the result of bringing the foregoing paths and levels to consummation, perfect buddhahood is attained: the totality of the four kāyas;³⁹⁶ an inexhaustible ocean of the qualities of enlightenment and the aspects of timeless awareness (including the twelve aspects of the meaning of truth and the sixteen aspects of suchness),³⁹⁷ which are in essence a state of primordial unity; and the uninterrupted embodiment of enlightened activity that is equal in extent to space itself. Those with good fortune and diligence, if they apply themselves to this sublime and unerring path, can ensure that the state of Vajrasattva, or Kālacakra, is swiftly attained in this very lifetime.

Thus, the foregoing discussions of this especially exalted tradition, as expounded by the mahāsiddha Śāntipāda and other learned and accomplished masters of the holy country of India, have been set forth in the flawless presentations of the Great Venerable One, Tāranātha, who was Vajradhara in these troubled times.³⁹⁸

The Vajrayāna Traditions of Tibet [III]

This discussion has two topics: preliminary remarks and explanation of the actual classification schemes.

Preliminary Remarks [A]

In the widely known tradition of the past, [4.135.a] from Rangjung Gyalwa and others, . . .

Now I will discuss the traditions of explanation given by learned masters of the past in Tibet, including the omniscient Rangjung Gyalwa³⁹⁹ (considered a second sublime Sage⁴⁰⁰ in the land of snow mountains) and his followers.

The Tibetan Schools of Vajrayāna [B]

The second part of the discussion has three topics: a general presentation of the paths; a special explanation of the levels; and an acknowledgment of other traditions.

Paths [1]

There are five topics in the first case: the path of accumulation; the path of linkage; the path of seeing; the path of meditation; and the path of no more training.

The Path of Accumulation [a]

... receiving empowerment, practicing development and completion, practicing with conviction, having meditative experiences that are still corruptible yet nonetheless excellent, and integrating sense pleasures into the path,
one traverses the beginner's level and the path of accumulation. . . .

Once one has received an empowerment as the factor that matures one spiritually, one stabilizes one's mind through the two stages of development and completion, as the factors that bring one freedom.⁴⁰¹ Through one's practice, based on conviction,⁴⁰² which focuses on the primordial unity of the two levels of truth (the state of suchness), one experiences countless circumstances in one's life as supports for one's practice. With the awakening of meditative experiences that, though still corruptible, are nonetheless excellent, and through the process of integrating sense pleasures into one's spiritual path, one traverses the level of a beginning practitioner, that is, the path of accumulation.

The Path of Linkage [b]

... With a foreshadowing and the experience of the hidden meaning of the illusory body, through the four descending gradations of joy, one traverses the level of practicing out of a sense of dedication and the four phases of the path of linkage. ...

Attaining the experience that foreshadows the actual state of utter lucidity, and the experience of the hidden meaning of the illusory body,⁴⁰³ one fully experiences a foreshadowing of the innate nature of being (that is, the inseparability of bliss and emptiness) through the process of subtle energy and mind entering the central channel, whereby the four descending gradations of joy are experienced.⁴⁰⁴ As qualities associated with the subtle channels and energies unfold, one traverses the level of one who practices out of a sense of dedication, that is, the four phases of the path of linkage.

The Path of Seeing [c]

... One beholds the actual state of utter lucidity.

Through the process whereby the subtle vital essence is stabilized in an ascending manner,⁴⁰⁵ this essence is blocked in the four subtle channels of the "banner of victory" (that is, the tip of the glans in the secret organ),⁴⁰⁶ leading to the full experience of the actual state of utter lucidity. This corresponds to the first bodhisattva level, the path of directly seeing the truth that is the actual nature of phenomena.

The Path of Meditation [d] [4.135.b]

With the stabilizing of subtle vital essence in an ascending manner, there is the experience of primordial unity that still involves training:
the path of meditation. ...

As the subtle vital essence is gradually stabilized in an ascending manner, the four corresponding gradations of joy arise in the reverse order from

before, reaching consummation. From the secret region up to the very crown of the head, the energy centers and cakras are successively purified, bringing the experience of primordial unity that still involves training.⁴⁰⁷ One thus traverses the path of meditation.

The Path of No More Training [e]

... No more training is consummation—the actual enlightened embodiment of timeless awareness.

The stages are due to the actions of beginners practicing by bringing this into their experience.

The progress is either developmental or nonlinear.

When even the most subtle aspects of the subtle channels, energies, and bindu have been refined so that they are free of obscuration, one is purified of the ordinary experience of the body and abides on the thirteenth level. This is the actual accomplishment of the state of Vajradhara, that is, the enlightened embodiment of timeless awareness, the rainbow body of the consummate path of no more training. The mere fact that there are stages of development is due to the actions of beginners who have initially entered the path practicing, which is to say bringing this into their experience in accordance with the key points found in the pith instructions. As for the individuals concerned, they may be either of two types: those who progress in a developmental manner and those who progress in a nonlinear fashion.

Levels [2]

There are two topics in the second case: the presentation of a related discussion (the manifest realization involved in the levels to be traversed) and the main explanation found in the source texts (the graduated path that constitutes the process of traversing these levels).

Manifest Realization in the Levels [a]

Concerning the first topic, the *Unsurpassable Definitive Expression* states:

... The Utterly Joyful One, The Immaculate One,
 The Illuminating One, The Radiant One,
 The One Who Meets the Challenge, The One Who Makes
 Evident,
 The One Who Has Gone Far, The Immutable One,
 The One of Brilliant Intelligence, The Cloud of Dharma,
 The Incomparable One, The One Endowed with Timeless
 Awareness, and
 The Vajra Level (the thirteenth).⁴⁰⁸

In this source, other than the latter three levels, the others accord in name and meaning with those discussed in the teachings of the Pāramitāyāna. The *Adornment of the Vajra Heart Essence* speaks of twelve levels (Light of Nectar and so forth) as discussed previously.⁴⁰⁹ The glorious tantra the *Wheel of Time* lists twelve levels, adding the level without obstacles and the level of complete freedom to the usual ten levels of spiritually advanced beings. The *Vajra Garland*⁴¹⁰ explains that there are fourteen levels, the *Sphere of the Supreme Seal*⁴¹¹ fifteen, and so on. Although there are many such classifications of more or fewer levels, [4.136.a] these are not in contradiction to one another since they derive from more or less detailed analyses of specific points concerning the qualities found on the levels of ordinary individuals and the ten or eleven bodhisattva levels. In brief, then, as explained in the various classes of tantra, the levels are named in one of three ways: by applying a name relating to the fruition in a causal context, (such as “The Utterly Joyful One”); by demonstrating the very essence of that fruition through the use of a metaphor that accords with the state it describes (such as “Total Illumination”); or by applying a name from the standpoint of qualities that awaken (such as “Abode”). The former two cases have already been covered. As for the latter, The *Well-Sealed Locket* states:

Abode corresponds to The Utterly Joyful One.
 Similarly, Inner Abode corresponds to The Immaculate One,
 Domain to The Illuminating One,
 and Inner Domain to The Radiant One.
 Intent definitely corresponds to The One Who Meets the
 Challenge,
 Inner Intent to The One Who Makes Evident,

Gathering to The One Who Has Gone Far,
 Inner Gathering to The Immutable One,
 Charnel Ground to The One of Brilliant Intelligence,
 and Inner Charnel Ground to The Cloud of Dharma.
 Concerning the levels of the ten transcendent perfections,
 contemplate on an outer and inner level what they are referred to
 as ("Pula" and the rest)
 in the arcane language of yoginīs.⁴¹²

This passage refers to the unique names in the unrefined language of yoginīs⁴¹³ that correspond to the more ordinary names for the levels.

(1) Regarding the first level, that of The Utterly Joyful One, the term "abode" used in the expression "Abode" means "support." It is called "Abode" because it is the support for positive qualities. There are abundant qualities that ensure one's own benefit, such as the states of meditative absorption and levels of deeper discernment associated with the first bodhisattva level, which involve so much utter joy because one finally sees the state of suchness directly, which has been unseen through successive lifetimes throughout the beginningless cycle of saṃsāra. There are also abundant qualities that ensure benefit for others, for one satisfies the minds of countless beings by relying on the transcendent perfection of generosity.

(2) The second level is called "Inner Abode." The prefix in this case⁴¹⁴ does not carry its more usual sense of proximity, as in proximity of place or time. [4.136.b] Rather, it denotes "inner," in the sense of the relationship between cause and effect, or the mutual connection between something being benefited and something benefiting it. On the outer level, Abode and Inner Abode are explained as follows: since the yoginīs dwelling there mutually benefit one another, this is termed "inner" and applied to the environment. On the inner level, the terms "Abode" and "Inner Abode" are used to indicate what would be more conventionally described as a cause ensuring benefit for a result, while that result is what is benefited by that cause. In a similar way, this principle applies to the terms "Domain" and "Inner Domain" and the rest. Therefore, this level is called "Inner Abode" because it constitutes the support for one to engage in the ten kinds of completely pure action by relying on the transcendent perfection of discipline and to gain mastery of states of meditative absorption and levels of deeper discernment.

(3) The third level is called "Domain." Just as a field is a domain⁴¹⁵ where excellent crops can grow, due to the consummate degree to which the transcendent perfection of forbearance is developed, a supreme spiritual vision grows through an undiminishing state of meditative absorption.

(4) The fourth level is called "Inner Domain" since the transcendent perfection of diligence ensures that positive qualities develop to an even greater extent than before.

(5) The fifth level is called "Candhoha." *Candha* means "aspiration" or "intent" (that is, the aspiration for the most excellent benefit for oneself and others). The suffix *uha*⁴¹⁶ denotes "I will fulfill this aspiration just as I expressed it" (that is, it denotes taking responsibility for it). Therefore, it is called "Candhoha" since one can bring beings to complete spiritual maturity by relying on the transcendent perfection of meditative stability, as well as by committing oneself to seeking out the teachings of the buddhas and perfecting one's experience of these.

(6) The sixth level is called "Inner Intent," for by relying on the full experience of the transcendent perfection of sublime intelligence, one can truly embody the aforementioned qualities to the highest degree.

(7) The seventh level is called "Gathering." There is a gathering in the sense that this level brings about an amassing, or to put it in other terms, it ensures attainment. Therefore, it is a gathering in that, relying on the transcendent perfection of skillful means, [4.137.a] one ensures the gathering of such qualities as the aspects of meditative stability⁴¹⁷ and complete liberation⁴¹⁸ by making effort without ascribing any subtle traits⁴¹⁹ to these qualities.

(8) The eighth level is called "Inner Gathering," for the transcendent perfection of aspiration ensures the effortless and spontaneous attainment of experiencing the complete purity of the animate and inanimate universe.

(9) The ninth level is called "Charnel Ground." It is called "Charnel Ground" due to the fact that this signifies the lack of identity in things. By relying on the transcendent perfection of spiritual power one realizes for oneself that all phenomena lack identity and teaches this to others, thus ensuring the most complete benefit for oneself and others.

(10) The tenth level is called "Inner Charnel Ground," for due to the transcendent perfection of timeless awareness, one ensures consummate benefit for oneself and others and perfects the ultimate faculties.⁴²⁰

At this point, the *Well-Sealed Locket* does not actually use the terms

“Quenching of Thirst” and “Inner Quenching of Thirst” to apply to any levels, although its intention is to be implicitly understood as such. The *Fronḍ of Pith Instructions*⁴²¹ explains Quenching of Thirst as referring to the level of one who practices out of a sense of dedication and Inner Quenching of Thirst to the level of buddhahood. But the commentary entitled the *White Lily* states:

Quenching of Thirst is Incomparable Timeless Awareness;
Inner Quenching of Thirst is Supreme Timeless Awareness.⁴²²

(11) In accord with this passage cited from the extensive tantra, the eleventh level is called “Quenching of Thirst.”⁴²³ “Thirst” refers to afflictive states, while “quenching” connotes engaging in positive actions. Alternatively, this level quenches in the sense of eradicating the masses of afflictive states; or, it is Quenching of Thirst since it eradicates tendencies that perpetuate ignoble states of existence, due to the momentum of distinctive features from the tenth level.⁴²⁴ And since it would be difficult for the preceding levels to serve even as comparable states to this, it is Incomparable.

(12) The twelfth level is called “Inner Quenching of Thirst”⁴²⁵ since afflictive states are eliminated without exception, together with their underlying habitual patterns. And since such a level constitutes timeless awareness in the greatest sense, it is Supreme Timeless Awareness.

One might ask, “Why is the thirteenth level not mentioned?” It is not discussed because, while the previous levels are bodhisattva levels, the thirteenth is that of Vajradhara.⁴²⁶ [4.137.b] For, as the *Unsurpassable Definitive Expression* states:

The Vajra Level is the thirteenth.⁴²⁷

The Graduated Path [b]

Concerning the second topic, the source verses state:

One attains these levels through the successive moments
of supreme and unchanging bliss, which derives from the passion
of sublime intelligence.

The first step stabilizes the masculine and feminine essences in the glans and the crown of the head.

A single breath is arrested and nonduality is beheld.

Whatever is perceived is experienced as bliss, and one gains powerful mastery of the world.

One might ask, "How are these levels attained?" One attains the levels of the tathāgatas through the successive "moments" of supreme and unchanging bliss, which derive from the "passion" of sublime intelligence. Let me explain this in more detail: When the first moment of this sublimely unchanging state occurs, the masculine essence is focused in the tip of the glans, the feminine essence in the very crown of the head. Of 21,600 breaths,⁴²⁸ one is arrested. At that point, one experiences the nonduality of self and other, and whatever one perceives merges in the single taste of supreme bliss. It is explained that one attains the eight qualities of powerful mastery of the world, such as a subtle form, lightness, and so forth.⁴²⁹

In succession, 1,800 moments are completed.

An equal number of expressions of the subtle energy of karma are arrested, as is ignorance.

In the lower half of the secret cakṛa and the upper half of the very crown of the head,

the masculine and feminine essences are stabilized, and the lesser gradation of joy and emptiness is perfected.

One attains the first level, named Abode and The Utterly Joyful One.

A single blockage is freed and ascent to the first level achieved.

One becomes a foremost and supreme master of generosity.

In a similar succession, the first of the twelve aspects of the meaning of truth is completed in 1,800 steps associated with the sublimely unchanging state. With this, there is the arrest of the first of twelve "junctures" (involving an equal number of expressions of the subtle energy of karma) and the first of the twelve links of interdependent origination (that of ignorance). The masculine and feminine essences (focused respectively in the tip of the glans and in the very crown of the head) shift, with the masculine essence moving upward and the feminine essence downward. [4.138.2]

The bindu of bodhicitta⁴³⁰ fills the lower half of the secret cakra and is stabilized there. At that point one experiences the least gradation of joy, the first of the twelve degrees of joy (the four gradations with three degrees each) that are stabilized in an ascending manner. The cakra at the very crown of the head fills with the feminine essence, so that one directly realizes the least degree of emptiness, the first of the twelve degrees of "manifestation," or emptiness (four gradations with three degrees each).⁴³¹ Of the twelve levels, one attains the first, called "Abode" and "The Utterly Joyful One." The first of thirty-two blockages in the central channel is freed, and the center at the very crown of the head emerges to the first of twelve successive degrees.⁴³² At this point, since one benefits countless beings, one is "a foremost and supreme master of generosity," which is to say, one thoroughly purifies and perfects the transcendent perfection of generosity.

Next, in ten series of 1,800 moments

there is successive completion and successive arrest.

The six cakras are stabilized by halves, with three blockages freed in each.

With the freeing of a final one, through ascent in stages, there is total completion of the twelve aspects of the meaning of truth

and 21,600 moments of unchanging bliss.⁴³³

In like number, the twelve junctures,⁴³⁴ the expressions of subtle energy,

and the twelve links of interdependent origination (the cycle of conditioned existence) are arrested.

Next, ten series of 1,800 moments of the unchanging state (which encompass the aspects of the meaning of truth from the second to the furthest limit of the eleventh) are completed in succession. An equal number of junctures and expressions of subtle energy are arrested,⁴³⁵ as well as the links of interdependent origination. The white energy⁴³⁶ moves upward in stages from the secret cakra, while the red energy⁴³⁷ moves downward in stages from the very crown of the head, stabilizing the six cakras one half at a time. In each case, three blockages in the central channel are freed. One's experience of joy and realization of emptiness increase, and one traverses the second and following levels, completing the transcendent perfections of discipline and so forth.

Finally, upon completion of the eleventh level, the final blockage in the central channel (the thirty-second) is freed. [4.138.b] The center at the very crown of the head emerges to the twelfth degree.

In this way, the twelfth aspect of the meaning of truth is completed in 1,800 moments of unchanging bliss, thus completing all 21,600 moments of supreme and unchanging bliss. An equal number of expressions of subtle energy, associated with the twelfth juncture, are arrested, so that all 21,600 expressions of the subtle energy of karma are arrested. The interdependent link of aging and death is arrested, so that the entire cycle of conditioned existence, constituting all twelve links, is arrested.

The full moon at the very crown of the head and the sun in the glans are stabilized.

The furthest limit of the transcendent perfections is reached, and the processes of elimination and realization are thoroughly completed.

At that point, the moon of bodhicitta, located above the cakra at the very crown of the head, reaches fullness, all sixteen of its aspects fully complete; one experiences the supreme state of innate joy that comes from an ascending process of stabilization. The tip of the “vajra gem”⁴³⁸ beneath the secret cakra is filled with feminine essence and thus stabilized, so that one directly realizes utter lucidity, that is to say, the supreme state of total emptiness. One attains the twelfth level, called “Inner Quenching of Thirst” or “[Supreme] Timeless Awareness.” Supreme compassion is completely perfected. In brief, the ten transcendent perfections are brought to consummation, and the entire processes of elimination and realization are thoroughly completed. This is perfect buddhahood itself, “the thirteenth level of the vajra holder” (which is the term used to describe the furthest limit beyond the twelfth level).⁴³⁹

The foregoing are the twelve levels that constitute the arrest of the twelve junctures of subtle life force energy (deriving from an analysis of the twelve solar mansions) and the twelve links of interdependent origination. This is the meaning of the following lines from the *Web of Magical Display*:

The root of conditioned existence (comprising the twelve links)
has been dug up.

One takes possession of twelve aspects of purity. . . .

. . . One embodies the twelve aspects of the meaning of truth.⁴⁴⁰

**There is the completion of joy and emptiness,
and so sixteen levels of realization; these are subsumed within the
former ones.**

Through an analysis of the sixteen aspects of the moon,⁴⁴¹ [4.139.a] the sixteen descending gradations of mundane joy (the joyful gradation of joy, the sublimely joyful gradation of joy, and so forth) come to an end, while the sixteen gradations of transcendent joy stabilized upwardly are brought to completion. As well, the sixteen gradations of emptiness (the empty gradation of emptiness, the extremely empty gradation of emptiness, and so forth) are directly realized. And so it is said that there are sixteen corresponding levels. The *Web of Magical Display* states:

Endowed with the capacity for manifestation, yet nonmanifest—
one takes possession of the bindu of the two halves of the
sixteenth . . .

. . . one is aware of the sixteen aspects of suchness.⁴⁴²

Thus, the analysis of twelve levels derives from the arrest of the twelve junctures, while that of sixteen derives from the completion of the sixteen gradations of joy. Therefore, given that the arrest of the twelve junctures and the completion of the sixteen gradations of joy take place simultaneously, one should realize that these two analyses do not stand in contradiction to one another. Therefore, these sixteen levels are understood to be subsumed within the former analysis.

Other Traditions [3]

**In conjunction with spiritual instructions, there are other
methods of classifying the paths and levels,
whose distinct features should be learned from their individual
sources.**

Even if the actual transmission is ultimately identical in every case, due to distinct ways of describing the situation, there are many variant clas-

sifications of the paths and levels and specific presentations of how these are traversed found in the classes of tantras. In particular, many different systems arose for explaining the classification of the paths and levels, in conjunction with the key points of spiritual advice unveiled by individual mahāsiddhas. These systems should be learned from their individual sources. In this work I am unable to describe these definitively, but if one can fit them well within the general format discussed above, one can come to understand these other systems implicitly since they are minor variations of specific methods.

*The foregoing constitutes the commentary on the second part,
concerning the paths and levels in the fruition-based Vajrayāna.*

[4.139.b]

PART 3. CONDUCT: THE PROCESS OF ENHANCEMENT

- I. Conduct in the Three Yānas
- II. Conduct in the Anūttara Tantras
 - A. Kinds of Conduct
 - 1. Bases of Analysis
 - 2. Essence
 - B. Detailed Treatment
 - 1. Ordinary Conduct
 - a. Summary
 - b. Extensive Explanation
 - i. Intent and Involvement
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 - 2. Spiritual Deportment of Pure Awareness
 - a. Essence
 - b. The Individual
 - c. Subcategories
 - d. Stages
 - i. Essence
 - ii. Occasion
 - iii. Purpose
 - iv. Process
 - aa. Environment
 - bb. Companions
 - cc. Motivation
 - dd. Frame of Reference
 - ee. Attributes
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- gg. Support
- hh. Training
- ii. Benefits and Qualities
- jj. How One Engages in Conduct
- e. Conduct in the Gaṇacakra Ritual
 - i. Elaborate Mode
 - aa. Practice of the Maṇḍala
 - bb. Enjoyment of Sense Pleasures
 - cc. Cakrasaṃvara Tradition: Gatherings of Heralds
 - ii. Unelaborate Mode
 - iii. Extremely Unelaborate Mode
- f. Related Issues
 - i. Degrees of Acumen
 - ii. Distinctive Features of Empowerment
 - iii. Intent of the Kālacakra Tantra
 - aa. Conduct of the Four Vajras
 - bb. Conduct of the Six Families
 - cc. Conduct of the Six Transcendent Perfections
 - iv. Summary
- g. Wrathful Activity
- C. Traditions of Past Masters

The third part is an analysis of conduct, that is, the process of enhancement,⁴⁴³ which is an auxiliary aspect of the spiritual path. The explanation of this includes a concise presentation of conduct as it applies to the three yānas and a more detailed explanation of conduct according to the Anutara class of tantras.

Conduct in the Three Yānas [I]

In general terms, conduct (as an auxiliary aspect of the spiritual path)

is said to be conduct free of the passions on the lower level, that of the transcendent perfections in the greater context, and that of desire and passion for those inspired by a profound approach.

Conduct, or spiritual deportment,⁴⁴⁴ allows for the spiritual path to be traversed swiftly. In the most general sense, according to the *Lamp That Integrates Conduct*,⁴⁴⁵ our Teacher⁴⁴⁶ taught conduct in three ways: conduct free of the passions to those to be guided who are on the lesser level; the conduct of the bodhisattva levels and the transcendent perfections to those who are inspired by a greater context;⁴⁴⁷ and the conduct of desire and passion for those who are inspired by a profound approach.⁴⁴⁸ It is the latter of these topics that I will discuss at this point.

In this regard, there are the following kinds of conduct: There is conduct that renders one a suitable candidate for cultivating meditation as a spiritual path (that is, conduct in the context of the empowerment that matures one spiritually). There is conduct that develops aspects of the spiritual path that have not previously been developed (that is, conduct from the initial stages of the path until the sublime attainment is realized). And there is conduct in order to enhance aspects of the path that have been developed (that is, conduct to encourage the flourishing of all the countless aspects of realization gained through the two stages of practice).

Conduct in the Anuttara Tantras [II]

This discussion has three topics: a general presentation of the various kinds of conduct; the explanation of a more detailed treatment of specific categories; and a further analysis of the traditions of past masters.

Kinds of Conduct [A]

In the first case, there are two considerations: the bases on which an analysis is made and the essence of what is analyzed.

Bases of Analysis [1]

If the latter (all that is explained in the tantras) is summarized, . . .

Of the three aforementioned interpretations of conduct, the latter (that is, conduct that involves passion) is spoken of at great length in the tantras of the Anuttara class. The glorious scripture *The Gathering of Secrets*⁴⁴⁹ speaks of many cases of meditation and contemplation associated with

these three kinds of conduct and gives a concise summary of conduct in the group practice of the gaṇacakra ritual. The explanatory tantra of this cycle, the *Adornment of the Vajra Heart Essence*, speaks of the extremely unelaborate mode of conduct,⁴⁵⁰ while the *Equal Union with All Buddhas*⁴⁵¹ deals extensively with the elaborate mode of conduct in the group practice of the gaṇacakra ritual. [4.140.a] In the three source tantras of the Cakrasaṃvara cycle, including the text in twenty-seven chapters, as well as the first and the eighth; the latter two analyses in the fifth chapter of the *Well-Sealed Locket*; the *Origin of Sublime Bliss* in twenty-one chapters; the sixth section of the first chapter and the second section of the second chapter of the tantra the *Vajra of Delight*—in all four of these tantric cycles⁴⁵² there are extensive treatments. Furthermore, in the chapter on engaging in spiritual deportment from *A Share of Mantra*, the explanatory tantra of the Caturpīṭha cycle,⁴⁵³ there is an extensive discussion that emphasizes the unelaborate mode.

In fact, the majority of tantras in the Anuttara class speak to at least some degree about conduct, but the foregoing will suffice as a summary of these.

Essence [2]

... it is of three kinds: elaborate, unelaborate, and extremely unelaborate.

To analyze it by environment, it pertains to households, charnel grounds, and sacred realms.

As for the mode, there is the conduct of eliminating duality, of complete nobility, and of total victory.

In all the tantras, such as the *Gathering of Secrets* and the *Equal Union*, three modes of conduct are described: elaborate, unelaborate, and extremely unelaborate. This constitutes an analysis from the standpoint of what conduct is in essence.

In analyzing conduct from the standpoint of environment, the *Origin of Sublime Bliss* describes three modes: engaging in conduct in one's own household; engaging in conduct in a charnel ground; and moving through sacred realms. Moreover, the glorious scripture *The Accomplishment of Secrets*⁴⁵⁴ describes two modes, those of engaging in conduct in pure realms and in one's household, in the following words:

By focusing in that way on the conduct that is one's samaya, accomplishment comes about even within one's household. But if the conduct that is one's samaya deteriorates, conduct will not ensure this, nor will being in the household.

In analyzing conduct from the standpoint of its modes, such source tantras as *Sublime Bliss*, the *Vajra of Delight*, and the *Well-Sealed Locket* describe these with three conventional designations: the "conduct of avadhūti" (which involves eliminating duality);⁴⁵ the "conduct of complete nobility"; and the "conduct of total victory." The sixth chapter of the *Accomplishment of Secrets* discusses the mode of "secret conduct"; the seventh chapter, that of the "conduct of pure awareness"; and the eighth chapter, that of "conduct in the group practice of the gaṇacakra ritual." To these the ninth chapter adds the mode of the "mad yogic practitioner's conduct." [4.140.b] The first two of these correspond to subdivisions of the conduct of avadhūti, while the latter two correspond to the extremely unelaborate mode of conduct. The foregoing is an analysis of conduct from the standpoint of its various modes.

The terms "the all-engaging conduct of a protector" and "the conduct of total victory in all ways" refer to one and the same mode. Likewise, "the conduct of a youthful monarch," "the conduct of a glorious regent," and "the spiritual deportment with an all-noble consort of pure awareness" all refer to the same mode. While the expression "tantric conduct" certainly applies in a general way to all conduct from the more ordinary level upward,⁴⁶ in particular, it refers to the foregoing modes. As for the term "the spiritual deportment of pure awareness," there are two contexts in which this can be used: one in referring to all modes of conduct and the other in referring solely to conduct in the sense of engaging fully in the world while shedding all its influences. One should also know that the term "secret conduct" can have two meanings: that of all modes of tantric conduct, and that solely of conduct that is carried out in secret and in which all mundane influences are shed.

Detailed Treatment [B]

In the second case, the more detailed explanation of certain special categories has two topics: conduct in the ordinary sense and the spiritual deportment of pure awareness.

Ordinary Conduct [1]

First, there is both a concise summary and the more extensive explanation.

Summary [a]

In emphasizing tantras of skillful means, there are two distinct modes: that of intent and involvement, and that of reliance and training.

In the ordinary tradition that emphasizes the father tantras,⁴⁵⁷ or tantras of skillful means, there are two distinct modes of conduct: that of a beginning practitioner (or intent and involvement), and that of reliance and training.

Extensive Explanation [b]

In the second place, there are these two modes: that of intent and involvement, and that of reliance and training.

Intent and Involvement [i]

For a beginning practitioner, activities such as those between practice sessions constitute the guidelines for training in intent and involvement. . . .

In essence, this mode of conduct concerns beginning practitioners, who in the periods between practice sessions still rely on all manner of sense pleasures (such as sexual activity, food and drink, and clothing), as well as on such positive postmeditation activities as casting small stūpas in clay, performing prostrations, and making offerings. All of this is imbued with a recollection of the deity yoga the person is practicing. [4.141.a]

Since this kind of conduct is not imbued with the actual experience of completely nonconceptual timeless awareness, the mind has both the motivation of intent and the sense of involvement in the actual activity, and both of these factors share some accord with those of ordinary mundane people. Hence this is called “intent and involvement.”

Reliance and Training [ii]

The second mode is discussed in two topics: an analysis, and the way in which one meditates. As for the first aspect:

... Single, twofold, or threefold modes:
by relying on and training in these, one engages in conduct
through alternation or combination.

Of the three modes mentioned (elaborate, and so forth) the elaborate mode is one of meditating with the concept that everything one perceives is masculine and feminine deities, and so relying on one's experience of sense pleasures in whatever way is supportive of this outlook. This occurs in all situations when one is practicing the stage of development. Since this comes entirely from training in perceiving things as one's deity and knowing things to be one's deity, this mode is called "the single guideline of training," or "the single point to be known."

The unelaborate mode is not one of primarily examining things conceptually but rather of perceiving the objects of one's senses as the enlightened embodiment of one's deity and so relying on one's experience of sense pleasures. Given that this is the context of the stage of completion (before concepts concerning one's perceptions have a chance to arise), one proceeds with awareness and trains in perceiving the deity's form, and in perceiving this in turn as simply a manifestation of mind, and so there are "two guidelines of training," or "the two points to be known."

The extremely unelaborate mode is one of perceiving the natural manifestation of the unity of bliss and emptiness as the deity's form, so that by relying on one's experience of the objects of one's senses one can appreciate the way in which the deity and the bliss have no independent nature of their own. There are three factors (of deity, mind, and their illusory quality) that are called the "three guidelines of training," or "the three points to be known."

Any and all of these modes apply as long as concepts arise concerning one's perceptions, up until the point at which one attains the path of seeing. They are called modes of "reliance and training" because one relies on one's experiences of sense pleasures and trains accordingly. In the case of any of these three modes, one's conduct might be a case either of alternation or of combination, depending on whether or not any of the

three guidelines of training occur simultaneously with one's experiences of sense pleasures. That is to say, when one is clearly perceiving things as the deity but does not experience the bliss of sense pleasure just as it is, or is experiencing it, but one's perception of the deity is no longer clear, then one's conduct is a case of switching between these two alternatives from moment to moment; this is conduct that involves alternation. Once one has gained some familiarity, [4.141.b] these can occur simultaneously; this is conduct that involves combination. The foregoing is the elaborate mode of reliance and training.

As for the second aspect:

Sense pleasures are meditated to be the vajra goddesses, arousing delight in the mind.

Between practice sessions, incorporate the sense faculties and their objects into one's path; this is the cause for the spiritual deportment of pure awareness.

During practice sessions, all mundane situations in which sensory experiences (visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, or tactile) takes place, whether nominally taken to be of an excellent, average, or inferior quality, are brought together in the single forms of the respective goddesses of vajra form and so forth,⁴⁵⁸ meditated on as being of surpassing beauty, artful and alluring, and bearing objects of their respective sense pleasures.⁴⁵⁹ One meditates until one has indications of actually seeing them. Once these indications have made themselves felt, this elicits an experience of supreme bliss, arousing a distinctive sense of delight in one's mind. This causes the sense faculties, and the experiences that depend on them, to evolve, so that these serve as causes to connect one to the experience of timeless awareness. When one is engaging in conduct in the periods between practice sessions, in any and every situation in which any given sense faculty encounters any given object of sense pleasure, one relies on, and engages fully in, that experience by, for example, meditating on the sense faculty as a masculine deity and the object as a feminine deity.

The *Lamp That Integrates Conduct*⁴⁶⁰ explains that these modes serve as the cause for one to be capable of engaging henceforth in the spiritual deportment of pure awareness. And given that these modes constitute tantric conduct, they can be summarized in this context as approximations of that spiritual deportment.

Spiritual Deportment of Pure Awareness [2]

Second, there are seven considerations in explaining the spiritual deportment of pure awareness: (1) an identification of what this is in essence; (2) a presentation of the individual who engages in this conduct; (3) a precise analysis of its subcategories; (4) an explanation of the stages of this conduct; (5) a special discussion of this conduct in the group practice of the gaṇacakra ritual; (6) a treatment of related issues; and (7) a presentation of the way in which one applies wrathful activity as an auxiliary mode.

Essence [a]

Concerning the first consideration, the source verses state:

Attributes, fellow practitioners, and song, dance, and other
creative activities
may be extensive or play a minor role, or one may rely solely on
meditative absorption.
In essence, this is a developmental process from an elaborate
mode to others.

There are extremely complex elaborations, such as wearing the attributes of one's deity, ensuring that one's fellow practitioners⁴⁶¹ are equal in number to the deities, and such creative activities as song, dance, and other symbolic forms of physical and verbal expression. These may also be used more randomly and to a lesser extent. Or, one may put aside these external elaborations [4.142.a] and rely exclusively on meditative absorption. These alternatives constitute a progression from an elaborate mode to what the above word "others" implies, that is, an unelaborate and extremely unelaborate mode. These three modes are explained in the *Lamp That Integrates Conduct* as what conduct is in essence.⁴⁶²

The Individual [b]

The distinctions concerning one's involvement in conduct
include what one's mind delights in,
and one's age, intelligence, material possessions, and degree
of desire.

Individuals may be of three types, depending on the degree to which their minds delight in elaboration, the degree of youthfulness depending on their ages, the extent of their material wealth, the degree of their intelligence, or the degree of their desire. The elaborate mode is for those who take great delight in elaboration, who are young, who have many material possessions, and who have a great deal of desire. The unelaborate mode is for those who have a moderate degree of the above and are more middle-aged. The extremely unelaborate mode is for those who have a lesser degree of the above qualities (taking delight in elaboration and so forth), and who are older. This is how one classifies the distinctions among those who engage in this conduct.

Subcategories [c]

Moreover, these three modes of conduct become nine in light of three contexts:

activities, meditation and contemplation, and occasion.

The mother tantras emphasize the spiritual deportment of pure awareness.

If we analyze the foregoing three modes of conduct further, there are the three modes of conduct as it relates to rituals or activities; the three modes of conduct as it relates to meditation and contemplation; and the three modes of conduct as it relates to occasions. The first context has been explained above.

In the second context, the elaborate mode of conduct is one of meditating and contemplating because all conduct that pertains to one's practice of the stage of development consists solely of meditation and contemplation that develops the practice through the use of concepts. In this case, even emptiness is allied with concepts, and the bliss, moreover, is nothing more than just a temporary experience. Once one has gained a significant experience of the unity of bliss and emptiness, from that point on the unity of bliss and emptiness that one cultivates in meditative equipoise integrates itself into all one's perceptions. This is called the "unelaborate mode" because one experiences sense pleasures as the arising of perceptions of the deity's form, without this relying on meditation that uses concepts exclusively. [4.142.b] In this case, the experience of emptiness

is nonconceptual in nature, and bliss, moreover, occurs effortlessly and to a greater extent. When one experiences the state of primordial unity, one experiences sense pleasures arising naturally as an ongoing state of purity, without anything among all that one perceives straying from being the manifest display of this unity of bliss and emptiness itself. Since this mode does not entail overt conceptual thought, it is called the “extremely unelaborate mode” of conduct as it relates to meditation and contemplation. It takes place as a blissful, pervasive experience of the unity of the manifestation of things and their emptiness. The three modes of conduct (elaborate and so forth) as it relates to activities also apply in all three of the above cases.

The third context is an analysis of conduct in the group practice of the gaṇacakra ritual, as the *Equal Union with All Buddhas* states:

Each day, or each month,
or likewise each year,
bless yourself thus through ritual and perform the dance of the
buddha Saṃvara.⁴⁶³

The elaborate mode is one of engaging in this conduct continually, that is, every day; the unelaborate mode, to engage in it once every month; the extremely unelaborate mode, to engage in it once a year on an appropriate occasion.

Thus, the three cases of conduct as they relate to activity apply to the elaborate mode of meditation and contemplation, and so on, giving nine situations due to applying the three cases of meditation and contemplation to each of the three of activity. In the case of six of these situations (those that pertain to the elaborate and unelaborate modes of activity), there are three further categories to each situation (that is, the elaborate and other modes of conduct in the group practice of the gaṇacakra ritual, with respect to the occasion), giving eighteen. Added to this are the three cases of extremely unelaborate conduct,⁴⁶⁴ making twenty-one. These become forty-two since one can either be staying in a single place or moving about to major sacred sites. Discounting the fourteen situations pertaining to the elaborate mode of conduct, one can further categorize the remaining situations as being of three kinds, involving either the conduct of eliminating all duality, that of complete nobility, or that of total

victory. This gives a final total of 108 situations of conduct. This analysis is the oral instruction of Guru Lhochokpa—some drops from the vast ocean of secret meanings as recorded by the venerable Tāranātha.⁴⁶⁵

The foregoing cases are the general guidelines of the spiritual deportment of pure awareness as emphasized in the mother tantras.

Stages [d]

This consideration has four topics: what the conduct is in essence, its occasion, its purpose, and the process whereby one engages in it. [4.143.a]

Essence [i]

In general, the essence of this lies in the distinctive activities of
the three avenues,
bringing enhancement through stable meditative absorption.

In essence, the conduct that is under discussion here constitutes distinctive conduct of three kinds (physical, verbal, and mental) that brings enhancement through one's having already gained an excellent degree of stability in meditative absorption with respect to one's practice of the two stages. The meaning of the term "special" is that one can enjoy sense pleasures just as one wishes, without having to block these, for this is conduct that causes one's experience of timeless awareness that is blissful yet empty (an experience that has already been stabilized to an excellent degree) to increase more and more.

Occasion [ii]

In the second place, there is a general occasion and there are more specific ones.

Concerning the first:

The occasion is when, through the stage of development, one's
chosen deity grants permission,
one is not overwhelmed by harmful events, one's meditative
stability is not shaken by circumstances,

one is equally indifferent to the eight mundane values, and sense pleasures are experienced as supports.

This constitutes meditative warmth of the lower degree of the stage of completion.

It brings the intermediate degree, with its accomplishment of the gazes of annihilation, and the highest degree, with that of the gazes of nurturing and the rest, and so is endowed with unlimited potential.

The general occasion on which one engages in conduct is that of the attainment of meditative warmth. One must have received permission directly, having pleased one's chosen deity due to the states of spiritual attainment one has gained through one's practice of the stage of development. One has attained this meditative warmth when one is not overwhelmed by harmful events (on either the outer or inner level); when one's meditative absorption cannot be shaken by any circumstances whatsoever; when one is equally indifferent to the eight mundane values; and when the sense objects one perceives in general (and sense pleasures in particular) become supports for one's meditative absorption to increase. The meaning of this "warmth" is that it is like the warmth that is the precursor heralding the onset of fire (to which spiritual attainments may be compared). In the tantras the *Vajra of Delight* and the *Well-Sealed Locket*,⁴⁶⁶ as well, are found such statements as:

Meditative warmth is attained to some slight degree . . .⁴⁶⁷

and the *Source Tantra of the Circle of Bliss* states:

Just as one should gain realization through striving
at any activities associated with meditative warmth, . . .⁴⁶⁸

There are three degrees to the meditative warmth of the stage of completion: lesser, intermediate, and greater. The lesser degree has just been explained; [4.143.b] however, in particular one must attain the aforementioned states by relying on the practice of the stage of completion itself. This degree of warmth is endowed with an unlimited and exceptional potential leading to further accomplishments, that is, the intermediate degree

(which entails such thorough accomplishments as that of the four gazes of annihilation) and the greater degree (which entails accomplishment of the gaze of nurturing).⁴⁶⁹

Concerning the second occasion:

There are five specific occasions: to gain states of ordinary attainment due to one's mastery of timeless awareness; to gain the ultimate state of a master of awareness, which is the fourth yoga of the stage of completion; to gain the enlightened embodiment that comes with the attainment of meditative warmth; and to experience the state of primordial unity with more training or no more training. There are two cases involving necessity.

There are special occasions for this conduct.

- ▶ One occasion is associated with the accomplishment of major (though ordinary) spiritual attainments, such as the eight siddhis,⁴⁷⁰ through one's abiding in the yogic practice that brings mastery of timeless awareness; this is the consummation of the stage of development on the obvious level, whether or not one also meditates on the stage of completion.
- ▶ Another occasion is that of engaging in conduct for the sake of attaining the state of a master of awareness in the realm of desire or that of form; this is the point at which one has gained the fourth level of yoga through some slight stabilization of one's realization of the stage of completion.

The foregoing are the two occasions associated with gaining states of ordinary spiritual attainment through the stage of either development or completion.

- ▶ Once one has attained the meditative warmth of the stage of completion, one engages in conduct in order for an enlightened embodiment to be achieved, an embodiment that is simply the unity of one's subtle energy and mind.
- ▶ Once that has been achieved, one engages in conduct in order to attain the state of primordial unity, that of actual timeless awareness.

- Once one has attained the experience of primordial unity that still requires training, one engages in conduct in order to attain the experience of primordial unity that requires no more training.⁴⁷¹

These three occasions are dependent on a certain level having been gained, for it is indeed the case that conduct becomes the primary emphasis once the meditative warmth of the stage of completion has been attained.

Thus there are five special occasions. It is not necessary for one to engage in conduct in order for an enlightened embodiment that is simply the unity of one's subtle energy and mind to be achieved. The first two occasions, which are associated with more ordinary attainments, do not definitively require that one engage in conduct. It is the latter two occasions that involve the necessity of one's engaging in conduct.

Purpose [iii]

The purpose is that of ensuring complete accomplishment of the two kinds of spiritual attainment and of causing those attainments to flourish and swiftly be brought to consummation.

Due to the specific variables concerning consorts (such as essence and number), one's realization of the unity of supreme bliss and emptiness occurs in specific ways. [4.144.a]

The purpose of this conduct is to ensure that the two kinds of spiritual attainment are completely accomplished and to cause those attainments to flourish and to be brought to consummation. Given that this is so, through the process involving one's own body and the bodies of others,⁴⁷² one may have already awakened an experience of timeless awareness that had not awakened before and stabilized what has been awakened.

Yet there still remains the purification of the body that is one's physical support and many ways in which the experience of timeless awareness that it supports can be enhanced. And even though one has become familiar with the causes for all of this through one's prior path of practice, one might still not be capable of bringing this to consummation in this lifetime.

But if one were to enhance one's practice by focusing entirely on the conduct of enjoying the pleasures of the five senses (emphasizing the pleasures of union with a consort) together with any auxiliary methods, one could swiftly bring one's practice to a consummate level, through the stages of this especially exalted process in which one is engaged.

Such conduct can elicit many different specific experiences of supremely blissful timeless awareness, depending on certain distinctions pertaining to the consorts chosen, such as their essential qualities, number, distinctive individual features, and degree of spiritual capability. This accounts for individual variations in the way in which such experiences lead to the realization of emptiness; just as, for example, individual and specific experiences in meditation can be awakened due to one's focusing intently on certain key places in the body. It is for this reason that the *Vajra Ḍāka* speaks of the many distinct variations in the way that the nectar of bodhi-citta can be controlled, depending on the distinctive configuration of the spiritual consort's sexual organs.⁴⁷³

Process [iv]

In the fourth place, there is a general analysis of conduct in the group practice of the gaṇacakra ritual and a more detailed classification of specific way for engaging in this conduct. Concerning the first, the source verses state:

As for the way in which one engages in conduct, that of avadhūti is
predominantly unelaborate,
that of complete nobility is balanced, and that of total victory is
primarily elaborate.

The first two apply to the path of linkage and the latter to the path
of the spiritually advanced,
but all three can be found in both ordinary individuals and
spiritually advanced beings.

If the ways in which one engages in conduct of the group practice of the gaṇacakra ritual are analyzed, there are three. The first, that of avadhūti (also known as "the conduct of shaking everything off" or "secret conduct") is predominantly the unelaborate mode. [4.144.b] The sec-

ond, the conduct of complete nobility, is a balance of the elaborate and unelaborate modes. The third, the conduct of total victory, is conduct that is primarily the elaborate mode.

The term *avadhūti* can be translated as deriving from *avadhūnoti*, which means “banishing the harmful effects of actions.” It can also be translated as “eliminating duality,” or “shaking everything off.” The *Well-Sealed Locket* states:

This ensures the swift attainment of what does away with harmful effects. . . .

. . . The practitioner of yoga carries out meditation in the context that is inconceivable to the ordinary mind;
this is explained to be the conduct of *avadhūti*.

All concepts are totally eliminated.⁴⁷⁴

This means that initially this conduct ensures that the harmful effects of one's actions and concepts based on dualistic perception are done away with, with the further meaning that it ensures that one's tendencies to conceive of things in terms of their ordinary characteristics and to misconstrue them as having true existence are undermined and shaken off, or banished.

The term “complete nobility” means that this conduct is such that any and all actions one commits, whether they nominally appear to be good or bad, are always and entirely positive in their essence. The term “total victory” is used because this conduct is such that one is truly victorious over afflictive states and tames the four *māras*,⁴⁷⁵ is endowed with the power to benefit beings, while one also does away with cognitive obscurations.

Of these, the first two kinds of conduct apply primarily to the path of linkage, while the latter applies primarily to the path of spiritually advanced beings. But in fact all three kinds of conduct can be found among both ordinary individuals and spiritually advanced beings.

In the second case, the classification has ten topics: Environment, companions, motivation, frame of reference, attributes, activities, support, training, benefits and qualities, and how one engages in conduct.

Environment [aa]

The environments for engaging in conduct are distinct locations,
major sacred sites and similar places.

In the conduct of the father tantras, one does not roam through
such environments.

As for the environments one moves through while engaging in conduct, these are primarily the thirty-two major sacred sites of India. The term “similar” refers to major sacred sites in such countries as Tibet, in each of which these sites are counted as being complete in number—in fact, complete in number even in any given city. The sense to be inferred from the words “complete in number” is that there are heralds dwelling there who have attained one of the ten levels (whether higher or lower), [4.145.a] and that they can act as allies in awakening one’s realization. Therefore, there are distinct locations, primarily major sacred sites.

In certain cases, conduct on the path of the father tantras does not involve one’s roaming through various realms because the presentation in these tantras does not focus on the mantras of the yoginis.⁴⁷⁶ But such tantras as that of Cakrasaṃvara speaks of specific features of conduct (that is, spiritual accomplishment through numerous specific gatherings of heralds) and the necessity of roaming through such realms is in order to achieve that purpose. Therefore, since they involve such skillful means, the tantras of sublime intelligence⁴⁷⁷ are especially exalted because their path is swifter.

Companions [bb]

As for companions, practitioners of the stage of completion are
unbiased,

while practitioners of the stage of development ascertain that these
are of like type,

while for both stages there are those whose attainment comes from
training and others.

As for one’s companions in conduct,⁴⁷⁸ practitioners of the stage of completion treat all who are in any way appropriate equally regardless

of social station, from those of the highest class to those of the lowest.⁴⁷⁹ Similarly, these practitioners rely on companions in an unbiased way, without regard for whether their individual bodies, youth, race, and other characteristics are ideal or not.⁴⁸⁰

Generally speaking, practitioners of the stage of development ensure that their principal consorts are of their own type. In particular, according to the tradition of the Cakrasaṃvara cycle,⁴⁸¹ when one embarks on spiritual practice in order to participate in gatherings of yoginīs “born in pure realms,”⁴⁸² one relies solely on “herald consorts born of mantra” and on no others⁴⁸³ because to do otherwise would create obstacles. Once one is participating in these gatherings of those born in pure realms, one relies on both.⁴⁸⁴ The foregoing constitutes one tradition of practice focusing on the herald consort. Alternatively, a second tradition involves practice involving yakṣī spirits and other beings, and of giving them food and other gifts.⁴⁸⁵

For practitioners who are involved in both stages of practice, the consorts are those who are motivated tantric practitioners mindful of the teachings; who have received the empowerments and samaya commitments that have passed down through a lineage of gurus; [4.145.b] who have thoroughly cultivated a spiritual practice based on meditative absorption in the two stages; who delight in being generous; who have little fascination with the distractions of mere sense pleasure; who are capable of achieving supreme bliss without being fixated on sense objects; who observe the discipline of controlling the senses according to the tantric approach; and who are able to cause the complete experience of timeless awareness to awaken in the practitioner. Such are the characteristics of those who are the consort companions for conduct as practiced in the two stages; they are heralds whose attainment comes from training. “And others” refers to the general characteristics of herald consorts, which one can learn from other sources. Likewise, one should be skilled in the way one interacts with a herald.

Motivation [cc]

The attitude has five points: the two kinds of benefit, absence of fixation, loving-kindness, and generosity.

The sole attitude with which to engage in conduct is in order to ensure the two kinds of benefit: freedom for oneself and for other beings. It is inappropriate to engage in conduct to show oneself to be noble, or to secure such things as food, drink, and clothing. In addition, one's attitude should not be one of fixating on personal wealth but of having great compassion for beings and of feeling that one has totally given one's body to beings as a gift. One should be motivated by these five points of attitude. The tantra the *Vajra of Delight* states:

Having given the gift of the body,
one goes forth and trains in authentic conduct.⁴⁸⁶

As long as one has not gained sublime miraculous powers, the meaning of giving one's body to beings is not one of cutting it up and giving it to them. Rather, if one commits the slightest physical action, even breathing in and then out again, one imagines this being for the purpose of liberating all limitless beings. This is what it means to give one's body to all beings.

Frame of Reference [dd]

The frame of reference for practitioners of the stage of development is deity yoga, while for practitioners of the stage of completion, it is integrated with one's awareness of utter lucidity, the unity of bliss and emptiness. [4.146.a]

If it is a case of conduct on the stage of development, one meditates constantly on deity yoga, including the protection circle and the armoring process.⁴⁸⁷ Imagining the entire animate and inanimate universe as having the nature of threefold purity,⁴⁸⁸ one views them within that framework.

As for the conduct on the stage of completion, in all practice sessions and in all the periods between sessions, one integrates one's perception of everything with one's awareness of utter lucidity and timeless awareness that is the nonduality of bliss and emptiness.

Attributes [ee]

One wears the attributes of the deity, . . .

It is said that while one is engaged in conduct, one wears the attributes of the deity that belongs to one's type. The *Two Sections* states:

Fine earrings for the ears,
 a wheel worn firmly on the crown of the head,
 bracelets on the wrists,
 a sash around the waist,
 anklets in similar fashion on the legs,
 armlets on the upper arms,
 a garland of bones around the neck,
 and a tiger skin for raiment. . . .
 . . . a turban fashioned from the hair of thieves,
 to which a Hūṃ is applied. . . .
 . . . adorned with a multicolored skirt
 and likewise with the ash from cremated corpses.⁴⁸⁹

These and many similar passages speak of the five (or six) symbolic ornaments.⁴⁹⁰ One should also carry the authentic insignia of the deity, such as a *khatvaṅga* staff, skull cup, and hand drum.⁴⁹¹

Activities [ff]

. . . seeks permission, and performs prostrations and so forth.

Rising early in the morning, with a completely pure intent one greets one's spiritual master and asks that one's conduct develop well, requesting permission to engage in it. Once this has been obtained, one maintains practice of deity yoga while employing purificatory techniques involving deity and mantra, such as smearing such substances as the five kinds of meat and five kinds of nectar⁴⁹² on one's body and performing the triple process of armoring. Should one see one's master or chosen deity, one performs prostrations and recites the deity's primary mantra. All this is due to one's eliminating ordinary attitudes concerning what is nominally held to be "good" or "bad."

Support [gg] [4.146.b]

One appreciates the equal taste of good and bad in a nonconceptual frame of mind.

At this point, one's circumstances are such that everything one perceives is experienced as blissful and so, with a completely nonconceptual frame of mind, one engages in conduct in a state of equalness, without any judgmental attitude toward what is nominally good or bad. As is said:

As for food, and likewise drink,
partake of whatever is found with enjoyment.
Because "attractive" and "unattractive" are just concepts,
do not pander to simplistic fixations.
A tantrika does not pander to what are just concepts
by indulging in thoughts of "edible" versus "inedible,"
or "drinkable" versus "undrinkable,"
or even "indulging" versus "not indulging."⁴⁹³

Training [hh]

**The guidelines of training are: not to show disrespect, not to express anger, not to transgress, and other such admonitions; to engage in conduct for beginning practitioners and in any situation whatsoever without fear; to give up rituals, certainty, and the like; and to acquire the means of gaining stability.
Not performing prostrations and so forth, one gains great stability.**

As for the training that applies in the context of conduct, this is grounded in one's maintaining the general and specific samaya commitments that I explained in the part concerning the tantric vows.⁴⁹⁴ The source tantra of the Cakrasaṃvara cycle explains that there are three aspects to the ritual purity observed in the gaṇacakra ritual: (1) practitioners of the stage of development do not show disrespect toward the deity's insignia, while practitioners of both stages do not express anger towards those who uphold the samaya commitments; (2) other than in specific allowable

situations, one does not transgress the samaya commitments of empowerments; and (3) during the four periods of the day and night, one cultivates bliss in union with one's mudrā consort.

The *Origin of Sublime Bliss* speaks of the kinds of conduct for beginning practitioners in such passages as the following:

Eliminate desire, anger, fear,
 craving, ignorance, and pride.
 Always eliminate naïve affirmation and nihilistic denial,
 as well as avoiding the editing and compilation of ritual texts.⁴⁹⁵ . . .
 . . . Completely eliminate anger, overweening pride,
 and reactions to praise or censure.
 Always be without attachments and without frivolity.
 Remain as ordinary as everyone else. . . .
 . . . One should remain without doubt,
 treating oneself and others equally.
 As for the conduct that is without desire,
 one may engage in all small desires.⁴⁹⁶ [4.147.a]

Next, the *Well-Sealed Locket* and the *Two Sections* state:

One should definitely never indulge in the slightest fear
 of any god or human being,
 even if it is someone like Indra.⁴⁹⁷
 Act in the manner of a lion.⁴⁹⁸

And the *Origin of Sublime Bliss* states:

Having completely eliminated all hesitations,
 the yogic practitioner acts like a lion.⁴⁹⁹

As the foregoing passages indicate, the samaya commitments for all cases of conduct involve the discipline that brings the attainment of stability, through engaging in any situation whatsoever without fear; enjoying whatever food and drink one finds; giving up such external activities as fire rituals; being without superstition regarding dates or planetary events; giving up any certainty regarding commitments that concern one's diet; gaining definitive freedom from vows that control

one's physical and verbal actions. As well, one does away with shame, timidity, and ordinary states of sleep.

As for the *śamaya* commitments of conduct for one who has gained stability in the stage of completion, they are as follows:

- ▶ to experience the eating of all food as an inner fire ritual;⁵⁰⁰
- ▶ to continually create visualizations of maṇḍalas in one's meditation;
- ▶ to consecrate all things whatsoever one perceives by knowing them to be the three vajras;
- ▶ to engage in an uninterrupted flow of mantra repetition by knowing speech to be mantra;
- ▶ to be constantly inseparable from the experience of timeless awareness;
- ▶ to give spiritual advice to human and nonhuman students;
- ▶ to ensure benefit for beings through annihilation and nurturing;
- ▶ to delight all buddhas by honoring one's own true nature;
- ▶ never to relinquish the experience of sleep as the state of utter lucidity;
- ▶ not to relinquish sexual activity; and
- ▶ not to prevent oneself from enjoying the pleasure of the senses.⁵⁰¹

Once one has gained a great degree of stability in this stage, one does not prostrate to any statue, [4.147.b] only to that of one's spiritual master or a guru of one's lineage, and so (it goes without saying) not to others. One does not perform any rituals such as those associated with the maṇḍala principle; such is the spiritual deportment of one who has gained this great degree of stability.

Benefits and Qualities [ii]

The qualities are limitless. . . .

Although the benefits and qualities that derive from engaging in conduct are limitless, let us consider just a representative sampling. In the section on conduct in the group practice of the gaṇacakra ritual from *The Accomplishment of Secrets*, we find the following passage:

If one engages in the spiritual deportment of pure awareness
in environments just as discussed in the teachings,
one is purified of the effects of all harmful actions without
exception
and gains freedom in the company of the mudrā consort of
awareness.⁵⁰²

And that is not all, for one can purify limitless other beings simply by
touching or holding conversation with them. the *Five Stages* states:

Knowing how to discern what manifest phenomena are by
nature,⁵⁰³
one relies on the fourth aspect, suchness.⁵⁰⁴
Whoever trains in the three aspects,⁵⁰⁵
they will swiftly attain the fruition.
Although the potential for fire is present in sticks of wood,
it will not occur unless they are rubbed together;
similarly, without the training leading to enlightenment,
it will not occur by itself.⁵⁰⁶

In this passage, the words “the three aspects” refer to the three modes
of conduct.⁵⁰⁷ Other than those who attain a lesser state of nirvāṇa,⁵⁰⁸
the circumstances bringing about the path of seeing and the consumma-
tion of the attainment of buddhahood depend solely on conduct, and
the swift accomplishment of spiritual attainments also depends solely on
conduct. If sticks of wood are not rubbed vigorously, fire will not occur,
only a slight smoldering. Similarly, if one lacks training in conduct, even
if one gains the consummate experience that foreshadows the actual state
of utter lucidity, the most sublime goal will not be accomplished in this
lifetime. But if one engages in conduct, it is impossible that this goal will
not be accomplished in this lifetime.

How One Engages in Conduct [jj]

... Initially, one engages in conduct in secret.

With stability comes that of avadhūti, which is carried out secretly
in disguise;

with the intermediate degree of meditative warmth, that of complete nobility (that is, the conduct of engaging fully in the world);
and with the greater degree of warmth, that of total victory in all ways.

Initially, one engages in secret conduct. The source tantra of the Cakra-saṃvara cycle states: [4.148.2]

Though always being open at night,
one should maintain secrecy by day.
The timeless awareness one enacts should be extremely hidden.⁵⁰⁹

And the tantra the *Vajra of Delight* states:

Engage in conduct in secrecy for one month.⁵¹⁰

In order for one to determine whether or not one's mind is stable, by night one roams in charnel grounds and such places, either accompanied by one's mudrā consort or relying on a consort of timeless awareness. One engages in various kinds of conduct that contradict mundane values. If, at that point, it turns out that one's experience of timeless awareness is slightly unstable, one temporarily does not engage in conduct, but meditates in order to stabilize one's yogic practice.

If, however, one has stability, one should familiarize oneself with that conduct for a month. It is then that one receives a prophecy concerning one's mudrā consort. Next, having requested one's spiritual master's permission, one engages in the conduct of avadhūti in full view of mundane people. But regardless of which mode one adopts, whether elaborate or unelaborate, one must disguise this so that ordinary people in the world are unaware of it. And so one pretends to be a lunatic, a bastard, a fool, a low-class person, and so forth, and trains thoroughly with a mudrā consort regarding whom one has received an important prophecy. Within a month one gains the good fortune to engage in conduct in company with that consort; alternatively, it is also appropriate for one to engage in conduct in the company of hosts of *ḍākinīs*⁵¹¹ or of yoginīs either born in pure realms or born of mantra.

One embarks on a variety of unpredictable modes of conduct by sing-

ing, dancing, talking randomly, playing, laughing, quarrelling, jumping, running, and so forth—all the ways in which one knows how to bring about a change in the minds of ordinary people. One meditates without one's mind shifting its focus, while engaging in conduct so that all kinds of base behavior could be experienced as supports for one's meditative absorption: behavior such as eating the five kinds of meat and the five kinds of nectar, tormas intended for nonhuman spirits, or the leftovers discarded at a ritual feast; or engaging in sexual relations with one's mother or sister, or someone else who would not ordinarily be a suitable partner.⁵¹² [4.148.b] In this context, vajra songs and dances that a practitioner can learn are not performed for the time being.⁵¹³

Once overt concepts have subsided within the foregoing context, and one has moved to the intermediate degree of meditative warmth, one engages in the conduct of complete nobility. While previously one may not have requested one's spiritual master's permission with regard to the objects and so forth one enjoys in one's conduct, at this point one definitely must request this permission; for it is at this point that one makes people in the world aware of the fact that one is truly involved in yogic practice. Using various supernormal powers to turn around the attitudes of even those who lack faith, one employs such methods as the four ways of gazing to bring about benefit for beings in numerous ways. And it is at this point that one participates in incredible gatherings of heralds born in pure realms, without having to make effort to do so.

Once one has attained the greater degree of meditative warmth in the foregoing context, one has begun to engage in the conduct of total victory in all ways. On the levels prior to this, objective circumstances may have exerted a slightly harmful influence, but from this point on this is not the case. In this situation, which is the initial stage of the conduct of total victory in all ways, one may rely on the mudrā consorts described previously. But since one definitely gains great capacity in this present context, one can call on goddesses who are relatively easy to summon (such as "the goddess of the water element" or "the sublime goddess of bindu") and can even call on great goddesses, *nāgīs*, *yakṣīs*, or *mātrīs*. Thus, one relies on either consorts born of mantra or born in pure realms (whose status derives from their training), or any of the foregoing four kinds (who are called on in the moment), and invokes *Vajrasattva* so that one fully experiences the path of seeing more or less immediately. Even once one has thus attained the level of a spiritually advanced being, one

relies primarily on this same level of conduct. This last level of conduct becomes for the most part a case of conduct in the group practice of the gaṇacakra ritual.

The beginning stages of the conduct of total victory in all ways is conduct that serves as the expedient cause in the context of the highest mundane experience on the path of linkage; it is thus total victory in all ways as this applies to ordinary individuals. [4.149.a] The conduct of avadhūti corresponds to the situation in which one focuses on the more obvious factors to be abandoned on the path of spiritually advanced beings and infuses these with the supremely blissful experience of timeless awareness, for one is as yet unable to overwhelm them. The conduct of complete nobility is that of overwhelming the overt expressions of these factors. The conduct that ensures that these factors will not occur in the future is that of total victory in all ways, as this applies to the three modes of conduct subsumed within the path of spiritually advanced beings. Generally speaking, the conduct of spiritually advanced beings is considered to be that of total victory in all ways, but the foregoing cases show a fundamental consistency between this and the other two levels of conduct.

Conduct in the Gaṇacakra Ritual [e]

The fifth consideration, that of a special discussion of this conduct in the group practice of the gaṇacakra ritual, has three topics: the elaborate mode, the unelaborate mode, and (as an auxiliary topic) the extremely unelaborate mode.

Elaborate Mode [i]

The discussion of the first mode has two topics: the treatment found in the source texts and the supplementary discussion. In the first case:

In particular, elaborate conduct in gaṇacakras involves the practice of accomplishment concerning the maṇḍala.

Through symbolic song and dance, one partakes of the inner fire ritual

and engages in the union of equipoise, embracing the pleasures of the senses.

In the Cakrasaṃvara tradition, one invokes the three kinds of heralds.

Among the kinds of conduct, the discussion of the distinctive kind of elaborate conduct in the group practice of the gaṇacakra ritual has three topics: how the practice concerning the maṇḍala for conduct in the group practice is accomplished; how one enjoys sense pleasures within that context; and the particular way in which one participates in gatherings of the three kinds of heralds⁵¹⁴ according to the Cakrasaṃvara tradition.

Practice of the Maṇḍala [aa]

First, in environments described in the tantras, one erects a building for gaṇacakra rituals that has all the necessary features. Of its three concentric “layers,” the outermost holds the storeroom and kitchen; the intermediate layer is the place for song, dance, and music; and the innermost sanctum is where the maṇḍala is drawn out. In the places associated with the deities, spread seats of corpses, tiger skins, and so forth. The male and female practitioners wear masks or paint their skin with color; hold the deity’s insignia, such as vajras, bells, and khatvaṅga staffs; and wear the five symbolic ornaments.

The principal participant occupies the central position, while the others arrange themselves in the cardinal and intermediate directions, ascertaining their respective family types. In this regard, one’s family is that of the deity on whom one’s flower fell.⁵¹⁵ [4.149.b] Alternatively, it is determined by the shape of one’s body and the formation of the subtle channel in one’s ring finger; or by the particular power of one’s mind, as in the following quotation:

Stable of mind, courageous of heart, very wealthy,
able to influence the minds of others, and diligent in carrying out
activities:

such progressions apply to Vairocana and the others.⁵¹⁶

It may also be determined by one’s specific tendencies to colors, emotions, and so on. Those who are women place themselves in the respective positions of the deities on the basis of such family types as that of the Lotus-Bearer.⁵¹⁷

If one is engaging in conduct in unpredictable places, one performs the foregoing extensive gaṇacakra ritual whenever appropriate (once a month, even once a year) enjoying sense pleasures on a grand scale, including all elaborations such as symbolic gestures, song, and dance. But one does not need to practice constantly with the building for the gathering, the seats, and so on, just as outlined above. Since one also does not need to adhere strictly to the colors, insignia, and the like, it is sufficient for one to be adorned with the five ornaments,⁵¹⁸ to wear a tiger skin or the shroud of a corpse, or to bear such insignia of the deity as are appropriate (such as a club or a hand drum).

In gaṇacakra settings in which the maṇḍala includes fewer masculine deities and many yoginīs, it is fine to have a number of the latter seated in each of the places assigned to masculine deities; or to them seated so as to serve in the role of offering goddesses (such as the eight goddesses).⁵¹⁹

If one is engaging in the conduct of “shaking everything off” while wandering in towns and cities, it could prove problematic if one insists on wearing the attributes of one’s deity to the letter, or if one does not exercise some caution in pretending to be a lunatic. It is therefore acceptable, for example, to adopt more unobtrusive attributes and to consider this to be in the true spirit of wearing the deity’s attributes.

Enjoyment of Sense Pleasures [bb]

Second, when one is engaging in conduct while practicing the stage of development, one visualizes the principal deity and the retinue all in accordance with the stages set forth in the sādhanā text; while one is practicing the stage of completion, these are visualized instantaneously. All sense experiences are consecrated with blessings, so that one partakes of food and drink as an inner fire ritual, just as one does during the gaṇacakra ritual. [4.150.a] One ensures that the maṇḍala of one’s body, with all the mind-body aggregates, sense fields, and components of perception, is completely suffused with supreme bliss. From among the goddesses who engage in conduct as one’s consorts, or those who are one’s students, one then participates at will, in any activity desired, with one who is skilled in the arts of desire. One thus perfects the spiritual attainment of mahāmudrā.⁵²⁰

The foregoing means that, with firm intent, one employs the three concepts⁵²¹ in arousing the six aspects of passion, and uses the relevant sexual

techniques to engage in the actual act of union. In doing so, through the four successive degrees of joy one comes to experience fully the innate state of timeless awareness, resting in equipoise in supreme bliss. When one rises from that state, one meditates on everything one perceives as being like an illusion, thus ensuring that everything that manifests is experienced as the embodiment of the deity.

In the periods between these practice sessions, without one's mind losing its focus, one engages in play on a grand scale: One participates in the stages of such rituals as the "dance of the buddhas." One joins with the yoginīs in offering 'mudrā gestures to the principal deity and receiving mudrās in turn (in answer to these) from the consort of awareness. Similarly, one participates in a process of performing various actions and receiving like actions in return, such as prostrations, offerings, songs, dances, and other physical and verbal gestures. In addition, one relies, according to one's wishes, on such aids as dramatic performances, music, postures, and the nine moods of dance,⁵²² embracing all of these activities with one's senses.

The Cakrasaṃvara Tradition: Gatherings of Heralds [cc]

Third, regardless of which conduct one adopts (whether that of staying in one place or roaming in various regions), in this tradition one must definitely invoke heralds. By one's relying on authentic heralds who have developed through training, those who are born of mantra enter into the bodies of the former and accept the offering of supreme bliss. This delights the latter heralds and they consent to actually gather, so that one can actually rely on them. This process ensures that one can supplicate heralds born in pure realms, of a kind that will accord with the environment one inhabits. [4.150.b] One invokes them by saying, "Please take this practitioner under your care!" so that heralds born in pure realms enter into the bodies of those born of mantra. Once these heralds born in pure realms have accepted the offering of supreme bliss and thus have been delighted, they consent to actually gather themselves.

Once one has relied on them, this process invokes the innately present goddesses who are the foremost of one's particular family. These innately present goddesses bless, and so enter into, the bodies of the heralds born in pure realms, and accept one's offering. Delighted, they actually convene

a gathering of innately present goddesses that one experiences directly. It is within that context that one gains freedom.

Through the three kinds of heralds accepting offerings, one's own accumulation of merit is augmented. As well, each successive level of practice is that much stronger in bringing one's obscurations to an end. If one encounters one of the three kinds of heralds, spiritual attainments of one of three degrees (lesser, intermediate, and greater) are accomplished by that very fact. But for those of little merit, no other "gathering" can occur than that imposed by the constraints of their karma; hence the necessity for such means for augmentation and diminution.⁵²³ This is, for example, like the case of a powerful alchemical method:⁵²⁴ although theoretically anyone using it could indeed attain the state of rainbow body, practically speaking those lacking in capacity and good fortune will not attain this.

As for those who embark on the path of the herald,⁵²⁵ what happens at the outset is the conduct of participating in gatherings of heralds born of mantra. For those who meditate exclusively on the path of yogic practice, however, the initial stage of conduct is that of relying on consorts of awareness who have become so through training. By relying on them, one invokes heralds born of mantra and only later participates in those gatherings. There are few who can participate from the outset, for even though a consort may be one who is prophesied to be such, this does not necessarily entail that consort's being, for example, born of mantra. This is because the three kinds of heralds do not require training, while the ones referred to here are said to undergo training.

In the second case, what is to be understood from a supplementary discussion that follows from the foregoing, one should be aware that in general there are three treatments of the gaṇacakra ritual: an ordinary one; an extraordinary one; and one that involves elaborations. [4.151.a]

As for the differences in how these treatments describe the location in which the practitioners gather, in the ordinary context this is a windowless building in a somewhat isolated location. As for the extraordinary treatment, we may cite Dombipa's treatise on the gaṇacakra ritual, entitled *Five Samaya Commitments*, in which the characteristics for choosing or rejecting a site are discussed in detail:

Ah! Vajra holders, rejoice! These sacred circles are not to be performed in ordinary places. You should avoid performing them where business is being conducted. You should also avoid

towns with their distractions, or the houses of brahmins, or the palaces of rulers, or the parks where the monastic saṅghas live, or places where uncivilized barbarians dwell. You should also avoid towns inhabited by those who hold extreme views, or wilderness hermitages, or places frequented by dangerous wild animals. Going to places where dākinīs roam, or areas on the fringes of settled communities, or solitary areas, or temples, or charnel grounds, or empty caves, or under trees, or forested areas, there you erect a building for gaṇacakra rituals that has three concentric layers . . .⁵²⁶

As for the elaborate treatment, in any suitable place one constructs a building for gaṇacakra rituals that has three concentric walls from the outside wall in to the center. Of these layered walls, the innermost and lowest is entirely underground; the middle wall rises halfway above ground, and the outermost and highest is above ground. Thus, people who view the building from the outside have the impression that it has only one wall.

As for the differences in the yogic practitioners who gather in these places, in the ordinary context they have proficiency in either of the two stages, that of development or that of completion. In the extraordinary context, they are those who have gained the status of true yogic practitioners, or are heroic gods and goddesses who are spiritually accomplished by nature. [4.151.b] In the elaborate context, they are solely those who are involved in yogic practice.

In any of these three contexts, a gathering in which the male and female practitioners are equal in number to the corresponding deities constitutes a gaṇacakra. When it is entirely made up of male practitioners, and is for the purpose of partaking of alcohol, a single female practitioner is seated to the left of the principal male, and this constitutes a “heroes’ banquet.” When it is entirely made up of female practitioners, and is for the purpose of partaking of meat, a single male practitioner is seated to the right of the principal female, and this constitutes a “heroines’ banquet.” The *Fronḍ of Pith Instructions*⁵²⁷ explains that a mudrā consort should definitely be offered to the guru in the case of a heroes’ banquet. A ritual performed by equal numbers of men and women on the basis of intent, relying on the consort of timeless awareness,⁵²⁸ is the kind of gaṇacakra for tantric practitioners nowadays; it is an approximation of a true gaṇacakra ritual. As for the legitimacy of relying on a jñānamudrā

consort (a consort who embodies timeless awareness), the *Five Samaya Commitments* states:

They embrace their consorts of self-knowing awareness;
if unable to, they should do so with those of meditative stability.⁵²⁹

Similarly, if the five kinds of meat and five kinds of nectar are not available, one can include them through a process of meditation. The same source states:

If there is any of these that I cannot find,
or anyone for whom I am concerned they may not be suitable,
the five kinds of meat and five kinds of nectar
can be conceptualized intently through meditative stability.⁵³⁰

In all three contexts, the masters who are invited to gaṇacakra rituals may or may not be spiritually accomplished; either is appropriate. In all three cases a fully ordained monk who is a vajra holder⁵³¹ is definitely considered to be ideal, and so such a master would certainly be honored with a higher seat than a lay master, unless the latter had attained a level of realization and was the elder in terms of the experience of timeless awareness.⁵³² If a fully ordained vajra holder is invited to a gaṇacakra otherwise made up entirely of lay vajra holders and needs a place, he should not be seated below them in the ranks but should be assigned to another location; this is described as the allocation of one's share in the gaṇacakra.⁵³³

These gaṇacakra rituals can be called by various names. A gaṇacakra is "a gathering of friends" if the people who gather are engaged in numerous different methods of the deity yoga; [4.152.a] in this case the term is applied in consideration of the deity yoga involved. In the context of a consecration ritual or a fire ritual, a gaṇacakra is called "a sumptuous feast," in consideration of the occasion. If a gaṇacakra is performed when masks are used equal in number to the deities and such activities as those of annihilation are carried out, it is called "the dance of the buddhas," in consideration of the purpose. If a gaṇacakra is solely for the purpose of making offerings to dākinīs, both transcendent and of the world, it is called "the offering to the goddesses of the family," or a "maidens' feast." These variant terms were described by the learned masters of Tibet.

As for the different occasions on which gaṇacakra rituals are performed, the seventh part of the *First Section* states:

On the day of the pretas, half-moon, the fourteenth,
and similarly on the eighth.⁵³⁴

And the seventh section of the ninth chapter of the *Well-Sealed Locket* states:

On the fourteenth day of the waning moon,
and in particular on the eighth,
and on the tenth of the waxing moon,
offerings become the very epitome of offerings.⁵³⁵

In the foregoing passages, the dates mentioned refer to the nighttime. In the elaborate context, one engages in this conduct for at least one month, or even three years and three fortnights or longer, without missing an occasion.

As for the successive activities of those who gather for a gaṇacakra, in the ordinary context this involves drawing out the maṇḍala. The *Five Samaya Commitments* states:

Until the master has granted permission, do not perform symbolic gestures. Until you have performed a supplication, do not open the gate. Until you have made a purificatory tormā offering, do not enter. Until you have invited the worthy participants and sponsors, do not engage in conversation. Until you have offered flowers to the master, do not take your seat. Until the masculine and feminine bodhisattvas in charge of activities have granted permission, do not join the ranks.⁵³⁶

Following this advice, one meditates on the circle of the maṇḍala. Beginning with the consecration of the alcohol and nectar, one participates in all aspects of the conduct. If the gaṇacakra is held in connection with “the empowerment of the great master” to attain siddhis, [4.152.b] in this stage of the path that involves one in conduct, the vajra master confers a truly authentic empowerment.⁵³⁷ One can learn about the exten-

sive ways to implement this method in the ancient manuals of the Indian and Tibetan traditions of Buddhism. As for the activities in the extraordinary context, these are as explained above, but following these there should be the enactment of a vast range of activities, and Khecara (the “enjoyment of space”),⁵³⁸ in which as many participants as are gathered gain states of accomplishment.

Unelaborate Mode [ii]

As for the discussion of the second, unelaborate, mode of conduct in the group practice of the gaṇacakra ritual:

The unelaborate mode is to rely on any appropriate part of the foregoing.

There is even a practice to bind yakṣa and yakṣī spirits to one’s service.

For the unelaborate mode of conduct in gaṇacakras, one relies on some appropriate part of the foregoing. There may be as many mudrā consorts as there are deities, or more; but there can also be just one awareness consort. One engages in any aspect of conduct that one feels appropriate, such as adopting the attributes, employing the maṇḍala, erecting the building for the gaṇacakra, and any of the activities associated with a gaṇacakra. But one uses fewer elaborations, so that this mode is far less extensive than the former; at times one may, for example, forego the majority of activities and just perform a few. With this mode, one can practice in order to bind yakṣīs and gods of the forest to one’s service, so that they procure one’s material needs. In the two latter modes of conduct,⁵³⁹ there are cases of those who engage in conduct while nourishing themselves with fruits of the forest. The *Gathering of Secrets* states:

One may engage in conduct
on a diet of roots, herbs, and fruit;
nevertheless, one can swiftly awaken to buddhahood.⁵⁴⁰

And so it may be that the activities of the gaṇacakra are somewhat less than complete.

Extremely Unelaborate Mode [iii]

The extremely unelaborate mode is that of the *bhusuku*, who does away with distraction and relies on the *jñānamudrā* consort and the utterly lucid state of sleep.

There are two actual kinds and three parallel kinds. . . .

As for the extremely unelaborate mode of conduct, one practices to bind *yakṣīs* and similar beings to one's service in any suitable environment, such as a mountaintop, on the banks of a river, in a charnel ground, or in one's own home. [4.153.a] One can also go about begging for alms, or have others obtain one's food. Doing away with all distractions, one lets go of deeply ingrained attitudes of fixation, not coveting even so much as a sesame seed, and practices assiduously by engaging in union with a *jñānamudrā* consort visualized as emerging from one's own heart center.

In particular, practitioners of the stage of completion meditate constantly on the utterly lucid state of sleep. This mode is also known as "the conduct of the *bhusuku*." *Bhu* derives from *bhuñja*, that is, "eating"; *su* from *supta*,⁵⁴¹ that is, "sleeping"; and *ku* from *kuthara*, that is, "moving only to defecate and urinate."⁵⁴² The term implies that one does away with all concepts other than those concerned with eating just enough to nourish one's body, falling asleep in the state of utter lucidity, and going to the toilet. In this context, meditating on the utterly lucid state of sleep does not refer to one's entering into this state of utter lucidity simply by falling asleep in a perfectly natural manner. That practice in fact exists in the other two modes of conduct in this section. Therefore, as a substitute for relying on a *mudrā* consort external to oneself (as practiced in the other two modes of conduct), in this mode one meditates on the utterly lucid state of sleep, which is to say that one is constantly asleep. Therefore, the term "the conduct of the *bhusuku*" is not used to refer to the extremely unelaborate mode of conduct for practitioners of the stage of development.

Let us analyze this mode more precisely. There are two kinds of such conduct. The mere conduct for passionate practitioners, involving sexual activity, is the extremely unelaborate mode of conduct solely for the stage of development. The conduct for diligent practitioners, bringing the

awakening to buddhahood in this lifetime, is the one which has just been explained (that of integrating the jñānamudrā consort with the state of sleep) and constitutes the extremely unelaborate mode of conduct in the true sense of the term.

There are also three kinds of conduct that parallel this extremely unelaborate mode:

(1) When one passes into the intermediate state after death, one's involvement in the path that leads to the perception of the state of utter lucidity at death can itself be integrated into the process of dying.

(2) The conduct of integrating awareness with the state of sleep can bring awakening to buddhahood in succeeding lifetimes: Since one has attained the phase of meditative warmth, one can focus one-pointedly on the utterly lucid state of sleep; while one might not attain the state of illusory body in this lifetime, one will attain it in the intermediate state after death and, on the basis of that, accomplish the enlightened embodiment of primordial unity; [4.153.b] alternately, there is also the possibility that one will attain nirvāṇa on the basis of one's accomplishment of the distinctive body of a master of awareness.

(3) Having traversed the ten bodhisattva levels to their furthest limit according to the sūtra tradition, one then embarks on the Vajrayāna approach, in which one engages in the conduct that constitutes the powerful means that is the expedient cause of attainment.⁵⁴³

Of these three parallel kinds of conduct, the two possibilities of the middle kind are not, strictly speaking, conduct in the true sense. While the latter kind is a case of relying on a physical karmamudrā consort, it is nevertheless included in the extremely unelaborate mode; this is a special case.

Related Issues [f]

The sixth consideration, that of a treatment of issues related to these foregoing modes, has four topics: relating them to the degrees of acumen; the distinctive features of empowerment; the enlightened intent found in the most majestic of tantras; and a summary of all these topics.

Degrees of Acumen [i]

... For the elaborate mode and the rest,
there are degrees of acumen (duller, middling, and keener) that are
progressively swifter.

Concerning the conduct that ensures accomplishment of the consummate step that foreshadows the actual state of utter lucidity, generally speaking, one must definitely engage in whatever mode is appropriate, regardless of which of the three principal modes this might be, whether elaborate or unelaborate. After one has accomplished the enlightened embodiment that is simply the unity of subtle energy and mind, it is alright to rely on any one of the three modes of conduct.

One engages in these three modes (elaborate or otherwise) in accord with one's degree of acumen. That is to say, the elaborate mode is for those of duller acumen, the unelaborate mode for those of middling acumen, and the extremely unelaborate mode for those of keener acumen; these are progressively swifter processes.

Distinctive Features of Empowerment [ii]

In connection with empowerment, the expedient cause is a factor contributing to manifest enlightenment.

For the yogic practitioner who is engaged in conduct, in very close connection with the conferral of empowerment is what is termed "the expedient cause as a factor contributing to manifest enlightenment." When the time is right to engage in conduct, a vajra master (one in human form) confers empowerment on a yogic practitioner who has attained isolation of mind.⁵⁴⁴ In this case, it is not simply a case of forging one's path through aspiration, but an empowerment in the true sense, complete with an actual consort.⁵⁴⁵ [4.154.a] Due to the auspicious circumstances of the practitioner maintaining samaya commitments without impairment, the empowerment into the expedient cause (as a more introductory factor that contributes to manifest enlightenment) is empowerment conferred by *nirmāṇakāya* buddhas. This empowerment may be conferred by an actual *nirmāṇakāya*, or by the previous vajra master serving in that capacity, or by that master being blessed by a *nirmāṇakāya*.⁵⁴⁶ As a more

advanced factor contributing to manifest enlightenment, one receives empowerment conferred by sambhogakāyas.

Generally speaking, this expedient cause, as it relates to the most sublime spiritual attainment, is in three steps: the initial onset; the conclusion; and the bridge that connects these two. The first aspect is that of empowerment conferred by a nirmāṇakāya and the middle aspect that of empowerment conferred by a sambhogakāya, while the latter aspect is all that constitutes spiritual deportment with a consort of pure awareness. The stages of empowerment from those of the water and the crown up to and including the secret empowerment⁵⁴⁷ are conferred within the maṇḍala of the gaṇacakra ritual. Once the sun is setting, one relies on the causal factor connected with the conferral of the empowerment into sublime intelligence and timeless awareness; then, oneself and one's consort awaken to manifest enlightenment at dawn. This is referred to in one of the tantras:

Once the vajra sun has set,
one begins the practice wholeheartedly.
At the time that dawn breaks,
the most sublime state of meditation is realized.⁵⁴⁸

Intent of the Kālacakra Tantra [iii]

In the Kālacakra cycle, there is discussion of conduct of the
four vajras,
the six family types, and the six transcendent perfections.

In both the extensive and concise versions of that most majestic of tantras, the glorious source tantra of the Kālacakra cycle,⁵⁴⁹ there is much discussion of classifications of conduct, all of which are explained as being subsumed within the conduct of the four vajras, the conduct of the six family types, and the conduct of the six transcendent perfections.

Conduct of the Four Vajras [aa]

From among these, concerning the conduct of the four vajras, the concise tantra states:

Through the purification of bindu by day and by night,
 there comes a steady flow of the white element,
 which is Māmakī, the goddess of alcohol. [4.154.b]
 Beef and the other meats delight the eyes and other organs each
 and every day,
 but not so other kinds of flesh, not even occasionally.
 The pure forms of the deities dwelling in one's self-knowing
 awareness are nourished by the five kinds of nectar.
 With the mind utterly immersed in emptiness,
 the sexual intercourse that ensures the equal taste of everything is
 not an avenue for rebirth.⁵⁵⁰

On the relative level, this passage means that a yogic practitioner who has gained some degree of capacity drinks the five kinds of alcohol, eats the five kinds of meat and the five kinds of nectar, and relies on the five families of mudrā consorts. But on the more definitive level, the meaning of the foregoing lines is that, in succession, one trains in bodhicitta; arrests the subtle energies (and the concepts these produce) associated with the five sense faculties; harnesses the bindu in the energy centers of the subtle channels through channeling subtle energies; and rests in the equipoise of bodhicitta as the stable experience of empty forms.

Conduct of the Six Families [bb]

Concerning the second kind of conduct, that of the six family types, the tantra states:

It is certainly the case that those of the vajra family should take life. Those of the sword should tell untruths.

Those of the jewel should rob others of their wealth, while those of the sublime lotus family should take the spouses of others.

Those of the wheel should guard alcohol, lamps, buddhas, and all objects of beauty.

Those of the *kartari* knife should not disparage the lotus of space—that is, women of any and all kinds, even those of a low social class.

For the sake of beings, one should give away one's body and one's wealth: one should not hold on to these.

O child of spiritual heritage, thus will you become a buddha in truth, but the Victorious One⁵⁵¹ states that in other situations you would not do so for limitless eons.⁵⁵²

The provisional meaning of these lines is that the lucid experience of meditative absorption as the unity of emptiness and compassion unfolds, while one gains the capability to carry out enlightened activities without hindrance. If it is certain that these means alone serve to benefit beings, without recourse to any other means, even the actions of taking life, telling lies, [4.155.a] stealing others' wealth, and taking others' spouses become supports for an enormous degree of spiritual development. Given that this is due to one's capability and power, it is not a case of ordinary harmful actions, like the use of poisons or weaponry. The way in which one relies on alcohol, "lamps" (that is, meat), and "buddha" (that is, the five kinds of nectar) is as explained previously. One also relies on the five kinds of sense objects, such as lovely forms and pleasant sounds. If one is able to harness the melting bliss that is not subject to degeneration, one practices with mudrā consorts of random social classes, including those of low class. In brief, conduct that goes against noble principles also serves to ensure benefit for beings.

The definitive meaning of these lines has four implications:

- (1) arresting the 21,000 aspects of the subtle energy of karma;
- (2) revealing spiritual teachings in whatever way benefits any being whatsoever;
- (3) striving at the means to accomplish unchanging bliss; and
- (4) striving at the means to accomplish mahāmudrā, the embodiment of emptiness that is endowed with all qualities.⁵⁵³

To these are added the following:

- (5) the four samayas of the definitive level, which were discussed previously, counted together as one; and
- (6) the arresting of bindu within the central channel through the experience of mahāmudrā, the embodiment of emptiness.

Once the foregoing are all the case, one may have two, or even three, mudrā consorts. Thus, there are samaya commitments for each of the six family types. The injunction to have the attitude of giving away one's

body and wealth to benefit beings is the samaya commitment common to all six families.

Conduct of the Six Transcendent Perfections [cc]

Concerning the third kind of conduct, that of the six transcendent perfections, the tantra states:

Generosity is giving up wealth and possessions. Discipline lies in not shifting, though your mind consorts with women.⁵⁵⁴

Forbearance is not getting caught up in sounds and other stimuli.

Diligence consists of subtle energy putting an end to the dualistic process.

Meditative stability and sublime intelligence, furthermore, constitute a mind that dwells in its innate nature, as well as its omnipresence and the language of all. [4.155.b]

The other four⁵⁵⁵ are found in the attainment of human rebirth, ensuring benefit for beings and performing miracles until the end of conditioned existence.⁵⁵⁶

Fourfold independence⁵⁵⁷ constitutes generosity; recollection constitutes diligence; consolidation and meditative stability constitute forbearance; harnessing and channeling subtle energy, and attention, constitute diligence; the unchanging bliss innate to mind and body, which derives from meditative absorption, constitutes meditative stability; the indestructible melody that is the speech factor of that meditative absorption constitutes sublime intelligence. Similarly, to say nothing of one's purifying oneself, giving spiritual teachings, and so forth, there is benefit for all beings who see, hear, think of, or touch one, in that they are brought swiftly to enlightenment; this constitutes skillful means. In order to guide any and all beings in any and all ways, one has various miraculous powers that derive from one's unconditional resolve; this constitutes aspiration. Due to meditative absorption in the state of primordial unity, one eliminates the seemingly self-justifying factors of conditioned existence (that is, afflictive states) and brings an end to the suffering of others; this constitutes spiritual power. One fully experiences the primordial nature of things (the unborn and unceasing state); this constitutes timeless

awareness, which is to say, the transcendent perfection of timeless awareness. One strives to accomplish the foregoing as much as possible.

Summary [iv]

All modes are subsumed within the two kinds of conduct, that of the stages of development and completion.

As many detailed analyses of conduct as there may be, if we summarize them all, they constitute conduct of two kinds because they ensure the accomplishment of spiritual attainments through the stage of development and the accomplishment of spiritual attainments through reliance on the stage of completion. Thus, they are all subsumed within these two kinds of conduct, that of development and that of completion.

Wrathful Activity [g]

**As for the trenchant activity of wrath, an auxiliary function of conduct,
this is not needed by someone immersed in the stages of
development and completion;
but for those engaged in mantra or the stage of completion,
there are situations when it is useful, just as there are times that a
horse is when an elephant is not.**

An auxiliary function of conduct is that of the activity of “forceful application,” also known as “planting the *kīla* dagger” or the “application of wrath,” which is to say, the application that strikes at the vital point of deity practice. This application is of two kinds. It occurs in conjunction with the stage of development; and also with the stage of completion since it is possible for there to be occasions on which [4.156.a] those who are familiar with the yoga of emptiness may need to perform it.

Concerning the first case, that of the application of wrath in conjunction with the stage of development, generally speaking there are two kinds of individuals who are involved in the yogic practice of the stage of development: those yogic practitioners who are more deeply involved in this stage, and those who are involved in the practice of mantra. The former kind do not require the application of wrathful activity; the

latter kind are, in essence, those who have gained stability in the more obvious aspects of the stage of development. Those individuals who are involved in mantra practice engage in conduct three times over in order to experience such spiritual attainments as pills and eye medicine.⁵⁵⁸ If one engages in conduct for six months or more without these attainments being accomplished, at that point one practices such wrathful activity as “slaying Vajrāsattva” (which is to say, stabbing the deity dwelling in the lotus of the consort with the kīla dagger). Thus, it is explained that in order that the deities confer spiritual attainments, one invokes them by driving home the key point of practice and so encounters the deities in a very short time, so that the most sublime attainments are ensured.

For yogic practitioners of the stage of completion, generally speaking it is held that the application of wrathful activity is not necessary. But if one is involved in the stage of completion and engages in conduct three times over, for six months or more, without gaining spiritual attainments, one then puts aside any continued practice of the stage of completion for the time being and brings about accomplishment by embarking on the conduct of the stage of development (which involves conceptual elaboration), including the application of wrathful activity. To give an analogy, if those who are trying to take a mountaintop mount elephants but fail to emerge victorious from the turmoil of battle, by dismounting and riding horses, they can emerge victorious. Therefore, according to the oral tradition of the great siddha Dechen Gönpo,⁵⁵⁹ for some yogic practitioners who are involved in the stage of completion, there exist occasions when it is necessary for them to embark on the conduct involving conceptual elaboration, including the application of wrathful activity.

Traditions of Past Masters [C]

According to the majority of past masters, the situation of a
 beginner [4.156.b]
 is one of observing samaya and vows and avoiding objectionable
 actions,
 striving on the path with the conduct of total nobility. Through
 this one gains warmth
 in the meditative equipoise of the stage of completion. The secret
 conduct practiced in concealment

then involves meat, alcohol, and consorts. When stability is gained in both meditative equipoise and postmeditation, in the company of one's consort, one adopts the attributes of a yogic practitioner and overtly engages in conduct in group practice; this is known as the spiritual deportment of pure awareness.

According to the explanatory styles of the majority of gurus in Tibet, the situation of a beginning practitioner is one of properly observing one's ordinary and more extraordinary samaya commitments and vows and of striving at cultivating a spiritual path without committing any objectionable actions⁶⁰ specific to laypeople or monastics (whichever one is); this is what these masters mean by "the conduct of complete nobility."

This brings about the attainment of the signs of warmth during the meditative equipoise of the stage of completion. With this, the situation is such that one has some small measure of mastery in the experience of timeless awareness. One still does not overtly engage in the activities of a true yogic practitioner but continues to avoid committing any objectionable actions, while in secret one relies on a consort, the five kinds of meat, the five kinds of nectar, and so forth. One engages in all the countless aspects of conduct for a tantric practitioner, in what is meant by "concealed conduct," or "secret conduct."

This in turn brings stability in both meditative equipoise and postmeditation. With this, the situation is such that one has a great degree of mastery in the experience of timeless awareness. Accompanied by one's consort, one adopts the attributes of a true yogic practitioner and overtly engages, in group practices, in all the countless aspects of the spiritual deportment of a tantric practitioner. This is what is known as "the spiritual deportment of pure awareness."

Once one has gained sublime capability and is free of the bonds of conditioned existence,
there is truly total victory, for one is free of apprehension,
tramples on counterproductive circumstances, and overwhelms the
three states of conditioned existence.
Conduct is explained as being in order to ensure benefit for others
who are to be guided.
All its modes lead one to the most sublime spiritual attainments.

Through the aforementioned process, one gains extremely stable realization and sublime capability, so that one is completely free of all the bonds of conditioned existence. One is free of apprehension concerning anything whatsoever. The conduct of overwhelming all counterproductive circumstances, [4.157.a] as well as the three states of conditioned existence, is what is meant by “total victory in all ways.” Although this is primarily done for the benefit of others who are to be guided, in the shorter term all modes of conduct provide enhancement that accords with the levels that are demarcated on the spiritual path, and in the longer term they bring one to the most sublime spiritual attainments that one seeks.

The foregoing constitutes the commentary on the third part, concerning an analysis of conduct, the process of enhancement that is an auxiliary aspect of the spiritual path.

PART 4. THE PATHS AND LEVELS IN THE THREE YOGAS

I. The Outer and Inner Levels of Significance

A. The Paths

B. The Levels

II. The Paths and Levels of Mahāyoga

A. Entering the Path of Mahāyoga

1. The Path of Sublime Intelligence

2. The Path of Skillful Means

B. Traversing the Path of Mahāyoga

1. The Path of Accumulation

2. The Path of Application

3. The Path of Seeing

a. Masters of Awareness Still Subject to the Complete Maturation of Karma

b. Masters of Awareness with Power over Longevity

4. The Path of Meditation

5. The Path of Consummation

6. Parallels and Degrees of Progress

C. Conduct in Mahāyoga

III. The Paths and Levels of Anuyoga

A. Acumen and Anuyoga Practice

B. Five Yogic Phases

1. The Path of Accumulation

2. The Path of Linkage

3. The Path of Seeing

4. The Path of Meditation

5. The Path of Consummation

IV. The Paths and Levels of Atiyoga

A. Empowerment in Atiyoga

1. Path and Empowerment
2. Four Levels of Masters of Awareness

B. Four Visions of Atiyoga

1. Sixteen Visions of Atiyoga
2. Sixteen Levels of Atiyoga

C. Qualities in Atiyoga

D. Conduct in Atiyoga

V. Summary

The fourth part concerns a detailed treatment of the paths and levels in the three yogas⁵⁶¹ of the Early Translation School's approach. This treatment is fivefold, including a general presentation explaining the correspondence between outer and inner levels of significance; individual explanations of the analyses of the paths and levels of Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga; and a summary that constitutes a cursory treatment of other topics.

The Outer and Inner Levels of Significance [I]

This treatment has two topics: the paths and the levels.

The Paths [A]

The Early Translation School's tradition of explaining the correspondence between outer and inner levels is, generally speaking, as follows:

the cakra at the navel corresponds to the path of accumulation,
that at the heart to the four phases of the path of linkage,
that at the throat to the path of seeing, and that at the crown of the
head to the path of meditation.

In this interpretation, when the unity of subtle energy and mind associated with these four centers has become adaptable, the qualities associated with these four paths arise in succession.

There are many variant treatments in the Early Translation School of the secret mantra approach, but generally speaking the tradition of explaining the correspondence between outer and inner levels is according to the vajra words spoken by Longchen Rabjam, who was Samantabhadra in person. He stated that in general the factor that led to the traversal of the paths is the twofold process, whereby the unity of subtle energy and mind becomes adaptable and refined. The adaptability comes when energy and mind penetrate the respective cakras; for there to be refinement, there must be a freeing of the blockages therein, including those of the minor subtle channels.

That is to say, with the unity of subtle energy and mind becoming adaptable in the secondary channels that branch out from the navel, one experiences the signs of meditative warmth associated with the three degrees (lesser, intermediate, and greater) of the path of accumulation. One beholds the presence of *nirmāṇakāya* buddhas. Through the accomplishment of the five deeper levels of insight, the levels of deeper discernment, and the minor supernormal powers, one is capable of emanation and transformation. [4.157.b]

With the unity of subtle energy and mind becoming adaptable in the dharmacakra in the heart center, one traverses the four phases of the path of linkage. Since one cultivates the five governing powers during the two phases of meditative warmth and the peak experience, the experience of timeless awareness as the subtle experience of manifestation (associated with the phase of warmth) is indicated by such signs as a nonconceptual state and the exhaustion of doubt and anxiety, while the experience of timeless awareness as the subtle experience of increase (associated with the phase of the peak experience) brings the attainment of stability in one's fundamentally positive qualities. One realizes all phenomena to be similar to dream images. During the two phases of patient acceptance and the highest mundane experience, due to the five strengths there comes the experience of timeless awareness as the subtle experience of attainment (the orientation in the direction of the experience of suchness that is associated with the phase of patient acceptance), which prevents lower states of rebirth; and one gains the meditative absorption that follows immediately in the wake of that, that is, the experience of timeless awareness as the subtle experience of complete attainment, which is associated with the phase of the highest mundane experience. One's fundamentally positive qualities do not contribute to anything other than liberation and

enlightenment, and one gains meditative absorption, supernormal powers, and so forth in greater measure than previously.

With the unity of subtle energy and mind becoming adaptable in the sambhogacakra in the throat, one gains the first level of a spiritually advanced being (that is, the path of seeing) and mastery of the twelve hundredfold qualities. One gains the ability to journey to the pure realms of the sambhogakāya buddhas of the five family types and receive spiritual teachings there.

With the unity of subtle energy and mind becoming adaptable in the cakra of supreme bliss in the crown of the head, one attains the nine levels of the path of meditation, from the three divisions of the lesser degree, starting with the second level of "The Immaculate One" (the lesser division of the lesser degree), through the third, and so on until the tenth level of The Cloud of Dharma (the greater division of the greater degree).

In the cases of the foregoing levels, the subtle energy of timeless awareness penetrates the respective cakras in order to free the equally subtle blockages, while at the same time there occurs in those cakras what is termed the "withering," or "incapacitation," of the subtle energy that can promote afflictive states, together with its attendant subtle channels. On these levels, the twelve hundredfold qualities increase simultaneously with each step.

In addition, on the eighth level consciousness as the coordinating mental faculty is transformed, so that one gains mastery of the experience of nonconceptual awareness. On the ninth level, the avenues of consciousness associated with the five senses (which are involved with perception) are transformed; one gains mastery of the experience of pure realms. On the tenth level, consciousness as the basis of all ordinary experience is transformed, so that one gains consummate mastery of enlightened activity. [4.158.a] The foregoing constitute mastery of both the experience of timeless awareness and enlightened activity.

Thus, when the unity of subtle energy and mind associated with these four cakras becomes adaptable in stages, the qualities associated with the perfecting of the four paths of accumulation, linkage, seeing, and meditation arise in corresponding stages.

The Levels [B]

Within the central channel are twenty-one blockages of the lateral channels.

With adaptability in the *nirmāṇacakra*, the first pair are freed, and so on, as these blockages are freed in pairs and one gains each of the ten levels.

Finally, the sublime pinnacle level above the crown of the head is attained.

Within the central subtle channel there are twenty-one blockages of the two lateral channels (the *rasanā* and *lalanā*),⁵⁶² that bind one to cyclic existence. As one pursues meditation on the spiritual path, the unity of subtle energy and mind becomes adaptable in the *nirmāṇacakra* at the navel. At that point, the first pair of blockages is freed and one attains the first spiritual level. In like fashion, pairs of blockages are freed, leading to one's attainment of each of the ten levels, so that one experiences the arising of their respective qualities. With the freeing of the last two blockages, the sublime level of the vajra pinnacle above the crown of the head (the "epitome of the sixth family"⁵⁶³) is attained. The *Pinnacle of Definitive Expression* states:

Blockages in the *rasanā*, the *lalanā*, and the *avadhūti* channels create the perceptions of cyclic existence, which are based on confusion.

When these are freed, there is timeless awareness, which is *nirvāṇa*.⁵⁶⁴

The foregoing points are the interpretation of the Omniscient Lord of Dharma,⁵⁶⁵ who synthesized the main principles underlying the intent found in the *sūtras* and *tantras*, the Old School and the Newer Schools of Tibetan Buddhism.⁵⁶⁶

The Paths and Levels of Mahāyoga [II]

The explanation of the Mahāyoga approach (the tradition of the *Web of Magical Display*) has three topics: the way in which one embarks on this

path; the way in which one traverses the actual path itself; and the conduct that is one's support on this path.

Entering the Path of Mahāyoga [A]

In particular, the root of the yogas is the tradition of the *Web of Magical Display*.

Through the three kinds of sublime intelligence, one arouses five aspects of bodhicitta:

directed resolve, aspiration, application, abiding, and consummation.

On the direct path that is far superior to four other approaches, with the resolve to gain release that they entail, . . .

In the extensive lineage of the Early Translation School, renowned as that of the “three yogas,” one approach in particular is that of Mahāyoga (which is based on the tantras), which is the tradition of Vajrasattva entitled the *Web of Magical Display*, the fundamental cycle among those of eighteen major tantras.⁵⁶⁷ According to this tradition, [4.158.b] as the *Three Stages* states:

It is taught that, in essence, one arouses five aspects of bodhicitta⁵⁶⁸ through the three aspects of sublime intelligence.⁵⁶⁹

That is to say, the essence of this path comes about through five aspects of bodhicitta. As to the way in which one's motivation awakens, there are said to be the following kinds of motivation: “motivation awakening on the level of the ground,” that is, when it awakens in the situation in which one has not yet embarked on any spiritual approach whatsoever; “motivation awakening on the level of the path,” when one first embarks on the approach of the śrāvaka or the pratyekabuddha and then abandons that path to embark on this approach; and “motivation awakening on the level of the fruition,” when one trains in the lower approaches up to their fruition and then embarks on this path of mantra.

As to the process whereby one's motivation awakens:

- ▶ “bodhicitta as directed resolve” occurs when one's mind is free of the fixed opinions found in lower approaches (such as those of ordi-

nary individuals, who are benighted by nature, or those who hold extreme views, who are benighted by design) and instead directs itself toward the Mahāyoga approach;

- ▶ “bodhicitta as aspiration” occurs when, on the foregoing basis, one aspires to thoroughly assimilate the meaning of the Mahāyoga teachings;
- ▶ “bodhicitta as application” occurs when one applies oneself to experiencing that meaning;
- ▶ “bodhicitta as abiding” occurs when, having embarked on this approach, one maintains one’s efforts to put the principle of inseparability into practice;⁵⁷⁰ and
- ▶ “bodhicitta as consummation” occurs when maintaining this effort brings one to the consummation of the five paths.

Once one has aroused these five aspects, one has entered the direct path of the unsurpassable yoga that is far superior to the four alternatives: (1) the approach of gods and humans, which entails the resolve to gain release from lower states of rebirth; the approaches of (2) the śrāvaka and (3) the pratyekabuddha, which entail the resolve to gain release from cyclic existence; and (4) the approach of the transcendent perfections, which entails the resolve to gain release from the two extremes.⁵⁷¹ Having entered this direct path, through these five aspects of bodhicitta one brings to a conclusion both alternatives: the path of complete freedom (through the principle of sublime intelligence) and the path of certainty (through the principle of skillful means).

The Path of Sublime Intelligence [1]

As for the first alternative, if we evaluate this path in a general way, once one has realized the view, one’s mind directs itself with resolve toward the meditative absorption of suchness.⁵⁷² Then one develops the aspiration to experience the illusoriness of things. That leads to one’s application to meditating on the single form of the deity. [4.159.a] One abides in the spiritual practice focusing on the elaborate version of the maṇḍala and the group practice of the gaṇacakra ritual. And one brings this process to consummation on the four levels of a master of awareness.

If we evaluate this alternative solely in terms of factors that are still corruptible,⁵⁷³ three aspects pertain to the view: directed resolve; aspira-

tion; and application. Abiding pertains to the four steps from the meditative absorption of suchness up to and including the elaborate version of the maṇḍala.⁵⁷⁴ Consummation pertains to the group practice of the gaṇacakra ritual.

The foregoing discussion illustrates how each of the five paths in fact entails these five aspects of bodhicitta.

The Path of Skillful Means [2]

As for the second alternative, there is a process whereby the mere onset of a directed stirring of bindu within the centers of the subtle channels brings about the arousal of bliss: this constitutes bodhicitta as directed resolve. The former moment of bliss fades, and one applies oneself to the succeeding moment: this constitutes bodhicitta as application. The subtle channels and bindu of one's body abide in their natural condition, so that the bliss that has awakened abides without ceasing: this constitutes bodhicitta as abiding. Taking the former moment of bliss as one's frame of reference, one aspires to the succeeding moment of bliss: this constitutes bodhicitta as aspiration. Through the process of bindu descending and being reversed, bodhicitta resides, shifting back and forth, in the tips of the channels in the vajra and lotus: this constitutes bodhicitta as a process of shifting.

It is said that the foregoing factors define someone following this path, from the point of view that they are the bases on which the five aspects of bodhicitta are awakened. However, they define the essence of that path from the standpoint of what is awakened.

Traversing the Path of Mahāyoga [B]

Second, the way in which one traverses the actual path itself is sixfold, entailing the paths of (1) accumulation, (2) linkage, (3) seeing, (4) meditation, and (5) consummation, and (6) an evaluation of parallels and degrees of progress.

The Path of Accumulation [1]

... one traverses the path of accumulation through the fourfold process that addresses both corruptibility and regression.

Generally speaking, in the context of the spiritual path there are four alternatives, depending on the presence or absence of corruptibility and the possibility for regression. The alternative that addresses both corruptibility and the possibility of regression constitutes the four yogic practices of the path of accumulation through which one traverses this path: supreme emptiness, compassion, illusoriness, and the elaborations based on the single form of the deity.

In conjunction with this, the alternative of there being corruptibility but not the possibility for regression constitutes the group practice of the *gaṇacakra* ritual, which is the path of linkage that will be discussed next; this is because it is the pathway without obstacles, linking one directly with the incorruptible state, in which conduct is carried out on specific occasions. [4.159.b]

The alternative of there being the possibility for regression but not corruptibility constitutes the case, for example, of an *arhat*, a spiritually advanced being who has already passed through the lower paths, being involved in the path of accumulation according to the mantra approach; this is because there exists the possibility that such a one might regress, due to an attitude based on self-centered thinking.

The absence of both corruptibility and the possibility for regression will be discussed in the next section. In the foregoing alternatives, corruptibility is explained as being of two types: primary and secondary. The primary type consists of the karma that entails deeply ingrained afflictive states, which causes one to fall into, and move within, the corruptible states of the three realms. The secondary type consists of three factors of corruptibility: the corruptibility involved in the process of rebirth, of physical embodiment being perpetuated without one having any control; the corruptibility involved in states of existence, in which pleasant and unpleasant states are experienced without one having any control; and the corruptibility involved in the physical body, in that the body must be discarded without one having any control.

The Path of Application [2]

In the group practice of the *gaṇacakra* ritual, with corruptibility but not the possibility for regression, the results of the path of linkage

are the three paths of seeing nonduality, meditation, and consummation and the four levels of a master of awareness.

In the group practice of the gaṇacakra ritual, which involves corruptibility but not the possibility for regression, the foundation is established through the five aspects of excellence.⁵⁷⁵ The mainstream practice is carried out through the four branches of approach and accomplishment.⁵⁷⁶ By practicing in this way (including any supportive rituals) for six months, one traverses the pathway without obstacles, which links one directly with the state that is not subject to degeneration, so that the fruition of a master of awareness is accomplished.

For a practitioner of the stage of development, the more common spiritual attainments (the distinctive factors of karmamudrā or jñānamudrā) link one with the state of a master of awareness in either the realm of desire or the realm of form, whichever is appropriate. One practicing the stage of completion may employ any of the alternative modes (elaborate, unelaborate, or extremely unelaborate) in the group practice of the gaṇacakra ritual, using the four yogic practices of supreme emptiness and the rest. Depending on one's level of acumen (keen, middling, or dull) one practices, respectively for six months, one year and two months, or one year and four months. This links one with the fruition states that result from this path, that is, the four levels of a master of awareness,⁵⁷⁷ which are themselves subsumed within the three paths of seeing, meditation, and consummation; these constitute the paths that involve neither corruptibility nor the possibility for regression. [4.160.a]

The Path of Seeing [3]

In the third place, the path of seeing is twofold: the state still subject to the complete maturation of karma, and that of power over longevity.

Masters of Awareness Still Subject to the Complete Maturation of Karma [a]

Although one has realization of the actual nature of phenomena on the path of seeing, the residual traces of one's physical body have not been refined away, so one has the three qualities of someone still subject to the complete maturity of karma.

One's positive qualities are augmented, one gains mastery of the four kinds of enlightened activities, and one gains deeper levels of insight and other qualities, so that one can benefit beings throughout a world system.⁵⁷⁸

Although those on the path of seeing are alike in their realization of the actual nature of phenomena, due to the degree of power and strength of their minds they are of two kinds: masters of awareness still subject to the complete maturation of karma⁵⁷⁹ (for whom the residual traces of their bodies have not been refined away by the experience of timeless awareness) and masters of awareness with power over longevity⁵⁸⁰ (for whom the residual traces have been refined away). The *Short Exposition of the Path* states:

Since capability may or may not have been gained,
the path of seeing can occur in two ways.⁵⁸¹

Masters of awareness who are still subject to the complete maturation of karma have gained stability in the meditative absorption of elaborating the single form of the deity, and so they engage in the group practice of the gaṇacakra ritual to some degree (whether ideal, middling, or minimum). Due to this, they have the three qualities of one still subject to the complete maturation of karma:

(1) they are not yet free of the flesh and blood body that is the result of that complete maturation;

(2) their minds have matured into the experience of the utterly lucid embodiment of the deity; and

(3) they have the certainty that, in whatever way they wish, they will be brought to the state of masters of mahāmudrā awareness immediately after becoming free of the confines of the physical body.⁵⁸² The *Graduated Path* states:

While the mind holds the image of the deity's form,
when one becomes free of the constraints of the physical body,
the symbolic embodiment of the deity becomes evident:
this refers to those "still subject to complete maturation."⁵⁸³

As for the conduct in which they engage, for their own benefit such activities as those associated with the configuration of the maṇḍala serve to perfect their twofold spiritual development, while they ensure complete benefit for others by way of their mastery of the four kinds of enlightened activities.⁵⁸⁴ And being endowed with the completely pure level of the incorruptible divine eye⁵⁸⁵ and other powers, they ensure benefit through their actual form, but only throughout a single world system,⁵⁸⁶ for the way in which they cause emanated forms to manifest is only somewhat similar to that of masters of awareness with power over longevity.

Masters of Awareness with Power over Longevity [b]

There is accomplishment through alchemical means, the descent and holding of bindu through subtle energy, [4.160.b] but the indestructible⁵⁸⁷ vajrakāya, in which corruptibility is finished with, is far superior to these.

With power over longevity through completing the path, omnipresent distortions are refined away, and due to the four kinds of spiritual miracles, the six levels of deeper discernment, and the twenty-five aspects of sense consciousness, one benefits beings in a three-thousandfold universe.

Generally speaking, power over longevity comes about in one of four ways: (1) by relying on medicines resulting from an alchemical process; (2) by relying on the process of bindu descending and being held; (3) by relying on the “lamp,” the focal center of subtle energy; and (4) through the final completion of the sublime spiritual path.

Of these four alternatives, here we are concerned with the latter, which is far superior to the former three. One engages in the group practice of the gaṇacakra ritual with a mind that is distinguished by its familiarity with realization born of the view and meditative absorption that come about through the three kinds of sublime intelligence. Due to this practice, one brings to consummation the realization of the first spiritual level, so that all that is corruptible is finished with. One’s mind and body have both matured into the experience of the utterly lucid embodiment of the deity, so that one has the vajrakāya, which is unborn and indestructible and endowed with the distinctive qualities of the rainbow body, such as

subtlety and lightness.⁵⁸⁸ One is a master of awareness with power over longevity through one's final completion of the sublime spiritual path. The *Graduated Path* states:

Having seen what is truly meaningful and taken one's involvement to its conclusion,
 through the spiritual attainments of practicing the conduct of the gaṇacakra,
 one finishes with all that is corruptible in the components of one's body and the process of rebirth.
 One has a vajra body and is of the type with power over longevity.⁵⁸⁹

As for the conduct in which these masters engage, for their own benefit they refine away the omnipresent distortions in their makeup, while for the benefit of others they act for the sake of beings through the four kinds of spiritual miracles,⁵⁹⁰ the four kinds of enlightened activities, and so forth. As for their attributes, the *Heart Essence of Secrets* states:

Although they do indeed take completely pure rebirths as human beings, or gods, or even as Brahmā, they abide on the special spiritual levels.⁵⁹¹

These are, in fact, the attributes of their emanated forms; these masters are, in essence, such that the physical bodies they had in their most recent lifetimes have been carried forward as vajra bodies, keeping the same forms as the previous physical bases, but in general endowed with the six levels of deeper discernment.

In particular, at this point they have left the domain of ordinary consciousness and entered the domain of timeless awareness, in which what is perceived are awareness's own manifestations. It is due to this key point that their visual consciousness alone can not only see forms, [4.161.a] but can also perform the functions of all five sense consciousnesses, also hearing sounds, smelling odors, tasting flavors, and being aware of tactile sensations. The same principle applies to the other four sense consciousnesses, so that there are twenty-five aspects of sense consciousness with which these masters are able to ensure benefit within a sphere of influence that is equal to a billion world systems.

For their own benefit, they are brought gradually or all at once to the state of either a master of mahāmudrā awareness⁵⁹² or a master of spontaneously present awareness,⁵⁹³ whichever is appropriate. There may also be those whose minds are so vast that they are brought to the ultimate level of buddhahood.

The Path of Meditation [4]

On the path of meditation, masters of mahāmudrā have illusory forms of timeless awareness.

Beginning with the level of The Stainless One, and up to the pathway of complete freedom on the tenth level, they are subsumed within five families of masters of awareness:

vajra, cakṛa, ratna,
padma, and karma. Indwelling distortions are refined away,
and enlightened activities are carried out in whatever way
necessary to guide beings,
on a scale equal to that of a sambhogakāya pure realm.

There is a momentum to one's familiarization with the meditative absorption of elaborating the single form of the deity; and there is an unwavering state of meditative absorption that is due to the object of meditation becoming fully evident once one has become purified of the omnipresent obscurations. These factors refine away indwelling distortions, after which one's own mind fully experiences the state of mahāmudrā. Thus, on the path of meditation one becomes a master of mahāmudrā awareness, endowed with an illusory embodiment of timeless awareness. The *Graduated Path* states:

One's own mind is the supreme seal, mahāmudrā,
the deity that becomes fully evident through meditation,
with major and minor marks of more common and sublime
attainment.

This is sambhogakāya, the second⁵⁹⁴—family of mahāmudrā
masters. . . .

. . . Endowed with the attributes of an illusory embodiment of
timeless awareness,
the ordinary elements are freed within the vajra body.⁵⁹⁵

That is to say, beginning with the second level, that of The Stainless One, up to and including the pathway of complete freedom on the tenth level, these masters are subsumed within five families: vajra, cakra (wheel), ratna (jewel), padma (lotus), and karma (activity). The former source states:

They become masters of awareness:
vajra, wheel, jewel, lotus, and sword.⁵⁹⁶

In regard to this passage, it is said that the term “master of awareness of the vajra” refers to those from the second to the fifth level because it is the vajra state of timeless awareness, born of realization, that does away with the more obvious levels of obscurity. [4.161.b] The term “master of awareness of the wheel” refers to two levels: the sixth because one engages in conduct primarily focusing on the transcendent perfection of sublime intelligence and presents spiritual teachings; and the seventh because one’s skill in means becomes ongoing, like a wheel. The term “master of awareness of the jewel” refers to the eighth level, on which one gains mastery of the experience of nonconceptual timeless awareness.⁵⁹⁷ The term “master of awareness of the lotus” refers to the ninth level since one refines one’s sphere of experience and acts for the benefit of beings without attachment.⁵⁹⁸ And the term “master of awareness of the sword” refers to the tenth level because one ensures benefit for countless beings through an abundance of enlightened activities.⁵⁹⁹ But there are, in fact, varying ways of classifying these demarcations according to the spiritual levels.

The attributes of the deity’s form (that is, of primordial unity) are the major and minor marks that express the very embodiment of complete perfection. For one’s own benefit, this refines away indwelling distortions, while for the benefit of others one can manifest emanated forms to guide beings in any way possible, even such forms as those of hunters and prostitutes. The *Graduated Path* states:

While not straying from the context of meditative equipoise, . . .
. . . they ensure guidance with emanated forms,
such as those of hunters and prostitutes.⁶⁰⁰

As for the scope and beneficial function of their deeper levels of discernment, they share the qualities of the twenty-five aspects of sense

consciousness with masters of awareness with power over longevity; but in this case these aspects are distinctly clearer and more stable, and these masters act for the benefit of beings who are on a scale equal to that of a sambhogakāya pure realm.

The Path of Consummation [s]

On the path of consummation, for masters of spontaneously present awareness, regents of the sixth family, the vajralike state refines away distortions of the three successive steps of subtle experience.

Their deeds, emanations, and sublime intelligence are somewhat like those of victorious ones.

During the path of meditation, the power of one's familiarity with what took place on the path of seeing is perfected, so that the three kinds of sublime intelligence purify one of indwelling distortions, such that one is by nature poised to abide on the path of consummation, without actually having yet attained the level of buddhahood. According to the enlightened intent underlying the lower and higher classes of tantra, they may be classified into three families, five families, and other models. In this case, however, we are concerned with the totality of the five spontaneously present kāyas, [4.162.a] bearing the attributes of supreme Vajradhara and functioning as regent of the sixth family, such as Guhyapati, or the Lord of Secrets.⁶⁰¹

As for the conduct in which these masters engage, for their own benefit there is the vajralike samādhi; this is the inner factor contributing to manifest enlightenment that refines away the most subtle cognitive obscurations, which are the distortions of the three successive steps of subtle experience. For the benefit of others, in postmeditation they act to benefit beings in a manner somewhat similar to that of buddhas. As for their emanated forms, they manifest these in ways that approximate those of the sublime nirmāṇakāya manifestations, such as performing the twelve enlightened deeds.⁶⁰² As for the scope and beneficial function of their levels of deeper discernment, the scope is that of the sublime intelligence that discerns things in all their multiplicity, somewhat similar to that of victorious ones; this ensures any appropriate degree of benefit on a scale as pervasive as that of space. The *Graduated Path* states:

Thus, pure timeless awareness itself constitutes the totality of the
 five spontaneously present kāyas,
 those of the vajra holders.

Without straying from this state, spontaneous and uniform,
 they abide in nonconceptuality,
 and having done away with latent tendencies,
 in a few steps they are the highest masters of awareness.⁶⁰³

Parallels and Degrees of Progress [6]

In the sixth place, the source verses state:

There are parallels to the ordinary levels of The Utterly Joyful One,
 The Immutable One, and The Cloud of Dharma,
 but although the degrees of progress are equivalent, there is
 superiority of intent and conduct.

A master of awareness who is still subject to the complete maturation of karma is functionally equivalent to a bodhisattva on the path of seeing (which is to say, the level of The Utterly Joyful One) in the caused-based approach. Furthermore, masters of awareness with power over longevity and the other kinds of masters are functionally equivalent to bodhisattvas on the first, eighth, and tenth levels of the caused-based approach (although even given these correspondences concerning the degree of progress on the path, the enlightened intent and the deeds and conduct of masters of awareness are far superior to those of bodhisattvas for numerous reasons). Thus, it is held that the eighth level of the cause-based approach is equal to that of a master of awareness with power over longevity, the tenth level to that of a master of mahāmudrā awareness, and the level of no more training (called “Total Illumination”) to that of a master of spontaneously present awareness. The *Short Exposition of the Path* states:

Furthermore, the first master is equal in circumstances to the
 first level,
 while the sublime master of the second kind
 is equal in circumstances to the bodhisattva of the eighth level.

The third kind is definitely equal in circumstances to the tenth level, [4.162.b]
for the vast enlightened intent and conduct of the former is far superior.⁶⁰⁴

Conduct in Mahāyoga [C]

As for the conduct that is one's support on this path:

Meditative equipoise is the one-pointed meditative stability specific to a level,
while postmeditation involves three kinds of conduct: the pursuit of virtue like that of a youth;
like that of a madman; and like that of a ruler holding the throne.
Decisiveness comes through the paths of skillful means and freedom and eight aspects of conduct.

As to what conduct constitutes in essence, the *Three Stages* states:

Because there are distinct states of meditative absorption, conduct complies with this, and one engages in it in accord with the scriptural sources.⁶⁰⁵

That is to say, conduct is any action committed by someone on the spiritual path through any of the three avenues of being, when that action is influenced by special skillful means. In this regard, conduct is of two kinds: conduct during meditative equipoise, and conduct during postmeditation. As for conduct during meditative equipoise, one engages in conduct through the one-pointed meditative stability specific to any of the five paths or the four levels of masters of awareness.

Here, though, we are primarily concerned with postmeditation. As to the way in which one engages in such conduct, one involves oneself by integrating sublime intelligence, imbued with the view of the lack of identity, with the skillful means of supreme compassion. It is this involvement that purifies one of distortions affecting the three avenues of one's being.

As for the derivation of the term, “conduct” corresponds to the Sanskrit term *carya*,⁶⁰⁶ and connotes that one carries out activities by engaging in the conduct of the mantra approach, in order to make one’s physical, verbal, and mental actions truly meaningful.

If we analyze this conduct, generally speaking, it is to thoroughly purify one’s body, speech, and mind. But if we elaborate on this slightly, when one is a beginning practitioner one has not yet gained stability in meditative absorption, and so one trains assiduously and carefully, remaining heedful, so that one’s behavior is like that of a “youthful” spiritual practitioner.⁶⁰⁷ The *Pinnacle* states:

Until one has gained stability,
one is unsullied by objectionable actions
and maintains the three levels of ordination.⁶⁰⁸

That is to say, in a heedful manner one guards the realization one gains during meditative equipoise, while in between practice sessions one carries out the ten kinds of spiritual practice⁶⁰⁹ and other postmeditation activities. [4.163.a] Once one has gained some small degree of stability in one’s meditative absorption and so is able to blend meditative equipoise with postmeditation awareness, one’s conduct is that of a “madman,” that is, conduct ensuring that one’s realization is able to stand up to any and all circumstances. And when one’s meditation absorption has become very stable and one’s realization does not undergo any fluctuation, one’s conduct is like that of a ruler holding the throne; one applies oneself solely to benefiting others. These are the three kinds of conduct.

More specifically, conduct is explained as being of two types: the spiritual deportment of the path of skillful means, and the heedful conduct of the path of freedom. In the case of the latter, there are eight forms of conduct. Seven of these are the conduct of people who progress in a developmental manner: (1) conduct based on faith and diligence; (2) conduct in accord with sublime intelligence; (3) conduct in accord with skillful means; (4) conduct that is focused on one point; (5) conduct that is involved with elaboration; (6) conduct that is involved with group practice; and (7) conduct that involves miraculous powers.

The eighth kind is the conduct of people who progress in a nonlinear fashion, which is superb conduct free of moral judgments.

The first aspect, that of conduct based on faith and diligence, applies to the situation of someone coming to a definitive understanding of the view. With three aspects of faith (that is, faith based on awe, a desire to emulate, and trust⁶¹⁰), one engages in hearing and contemplating spiritual teachings, pursuing these to their conclusion with unflagging diligence.

The second aspect, that of conduct in accord with sublime intelligence, applies to the situation of someone experiencing supreme emptiness. In meditative equipoise, one maintains the meditative absorption of supreme emptiness. In postmeditation, one engages in conduct in the aftermath of that.

The third aspect, that of conduct in accord with skillful means, applies to the situation of someone experiencing compassion and the illusoriness of things. In meditative equipoise, one cultivates illusion-like compassion toward all beings included in the six classes, without naïve attachment to any of them. In postmeditation, one views everything within one's sphere of perception as being like an illusion.

The fourth aspect, that of conduct focused on one point, applies to the situation of someone meditating on the single form of the deity. In meditative equipoise, one meditates on the single form of the deity (peaceful if a peaceful deity practice, wrathful if a wrathful one), the enlightened embodiment expressing the primordial unity of emptiness and compassion. In postmeditation, too, one maintains the continuity of that practice.

The fifth aspect, that of conduct involved with elaboration, [4.163.b] applies to the situation of someone meditating on the elaborated maṇḍala of the deity. In both meditative equipoise and postmeditation, one trains in increasing the previous single form of the deity so that the vision of the deity unfolds, becoming the manifestation of a maṇḍala of deities, with a principal figure or figures and the retinue, as an expression of this primordial unity that one integrates continuously into one's awareness as a naturally arising manifestation.

The sixth aspect, that of conduct involved with group practice, applies to the situation of someone engaging in the group practice of the gaṇacakra ritual. In both meditative equipoise and postmeditation, one engages without interruption in conduct that involves five ritual elements. The *Graduated Path* states:

One engages in conduct that involves five ritual elements;
there are two kinds of actual offerings.⁶¹¹

As for the five ritual elements mentioned, the same source describes them as follows:

Raiment, ornaments, food and drink, song and chant, and dance—
if one engages wholeheartedly in these as the massing clouds of the
gaṇacakra,
knowing them to embody *Hūm*,
the maṇḍala that is the source of marvels is delighted.⁶¹²

The seventh aspect, that of conduct involving miraculous powers, applies to the situations of the four levels of masters of awareness. Thus, there are four contexts: that of a master of awareness still subject to the complete maturation of karma; that of a master of awareness with power over longevity; that of a master of mahāmudrā awareness; and that of a master of spontaneously present awareness.

In the first context, for one's own benefit one uses the activities associated with the configuration of the maṇḍala to perfect one's twofold spiritual development. For the benefit of others, one ensures complete benefit through the four kinds of enlightened activities.

In the second context, for one's own benefit one refines one's dynamic experience of pure awareness by cultivating one's view, so that omnipresent distortions are refined away. For the benefit of others, one ensures benefit through the four kinds of spiritual miracles, the four kinds of enlightened activities, and other means.

In the third context, for one's own benefit one refines away indwelling distortions. For the benefit of others, without straying from the context of one's enlightened intent, one acts for the welfare of all, in impure and relatively pure states, through myriad emanations.

In the fourth context, for one's own benefit one relies on the victorious ones of the five families and others, refining away the cognitive obscurations. For the benefit of others, one manifests the myriad deeds of the nirmāṇakāya, such as the twelve enlightened deeds, in buddha realms without limit, and acts as a codifier of the secret tantras.

The eighth form of conduct is that of people who progress on the path of freedom in a nonlinear fashion. [4.164.a] This is superb conduct, for

in postmeditation awareness one has no fixed conceptual framework, has no attachment, and is free of any deliberate effort or reifying concepts. As the *All-Embracing Intent* states:

Engage in yogic conduct with no fixed conceptual framework;
although one engages in all conduct in such a manner,
ultimate reality is the most sublime form of conduct.⁶¹³

Which is to say, the decisive experience of this comes about through the foregoing aspects of conduct.

The Paths and Levels of Anuyoga [III]

The explanation of the Anuyoga approach (the tradition based on explanatory commentaries⁶¹⁴) has two topics: a general discussion of the way this approach relates to one's acumen, and specific individual discussions of how its classification of five yogic phases⁶¹⁵ relates to its levels.⁶¹⁶

Acumen and Anuyoga Practice [A]

In Anu, for the highest level of mind, the paths and levels are
traversed in one fell swoop;
the intermediate and lesser levels are either traversed in succession
or in a nonlinear way, moreover, . . .

In the Anuyoga tradition, generally speaking, those whose minds are of the highest level, and very powerful, reach the conclusion of this path by accomplishing all the states of realization, and the familiarity thereof, in one fell swoop. So they are saved any of the effort involved in traversing the paths and levels in succession. Those on both the intermediate and the lesser levels traverse the four paths that require training (including the ten spiritual levels) either in succession or in a nonlinear fashion, whichever is appropriate under the circumstances; this brings them to the final fruition state, the path of no more training. The word "moreover" signifies that this line of verse is grammatically connected in with the following one.

Five Yogic Phases [B]

Second, there are five discussions: those of the paths of accumulation, linkage, seeing, meditation, and consummation.

The Path of Accumulation [1]

... so two levels, that of unpredictable change and that of the basis of reliance,
constitute the path of accumulation (the directing of will),
in which the deity's embodiment is an expression of one's
dedicated intent.

This ensures the more common accomplishments, such as deeper
levels of insight and levels of deeper discernment.

Let me briefly describe the way in which the ten levels correspond to the five yogic phases in the interpretation of this tradition. In the first place, there are two levels that constitute the path of accumulation: "the level of unpredictable change"⁶¹⁷ and "the level of the basis of reliance."⁶¹⁸ They are subsumed within "the yoga of the mind's directed intent,"⁶¹⁹ in which the embodiment of the deity is an expression of one's dedicated intent. This phase ensures the accomplishment of the more common spiritual attainments, such as the deeper levels of insight and the levels of deeper discernment.

The Path of Linkage [2]

The levels of the major refining process, the continuity, and the basis of merit
constitute the path of linkage (the affirmation of one's birthright),
in which the embodiment of the deity's form is an expression
of the unity of subtle energy and mind.

Three levels (the third, the "level of refining away major obscurations";⁶²⁰ [4.164.b] the fourth, the "level of continuity of training";⁶²¹ and the fifth, the "level of the meritorious basis"⁶²²) constitute the path of linkage, called "the yoga of affirming one's spiritual birthright."⁶²³ This ensures the

accomplishment of the deity's embodiment as an expression of the unity of subtle energy and mind.

The Path of Seeing [3]

**Due to the expedient cause, changeable bliss is done away with,
and all that is corruptible comes to an end.**

**Improvement constitutes the path of seeing, in which the
embodiment of the deity is an expression of the unity of bliss
and emptiness.**

In this case, one relies on the group practice of the gaṇacakra ritual as the expedient cause that does away with the most obvious states of changeable bliss. With all that is corruptible having thus come to an end, this is the sixth level, the "level of the improvement of stability," which constitutes the path of seeing, which is called "the yoga of supreme inspiration."⁶²⁴ This ensures the accomplishment of the deity's embodiment as an expression of utter lucidity, the unity of bliss and emptiness.

The Path of Meditation [4]

**The framework that ushers in the fruition constitutes the path of
meditation, the receiving of the supreme transmission.**

**The embodiment of the deity is an expression of the uninterrupted
state of primordial unity that still involves training.**

In the aftermath of one's arising from the utterly lucid state of the path of seeing comes the seventh level, the "level of the framework that ushers in the fruition state,"⁶²⁵ which constitutes the path of meditation, called "the yoga of receiving the supreme transmission."⁶²⁶ This ensures the accomplishment of the embodiment of primordial unity that still involves training, that is, the uninterrupted state of timeless awareness as the realization of the actual nature of phenomena and of the pure perception of the deity's embodiment.

The Path of Consummation [5]

Three levels—abiding without change, permeation, and the universal range of perfection—constitute the path of consummation, the perfecting of supreme dynamic energy. Through the pathway without obstacles that lies at the very threshold of enlightenment, the empowerment of supreme passion refines away subtle distortions, bringing the experience of primordial unity that requires no more training.

Next, three levels (the eighth, the “level of abiding without change”;⁶²⁷ the ninth, the “level of the permeation of the actual nature of phenomena”;⁶²⁸ and the tenth, the “level of the universal range of perfection”⁶²⁹) constitute the path of consummation, subsumed within what is called “the yoga of perfecting supreme dynamic energy.”⁶³⁰ The outcome of this is the path of no more training: by one’s relying on the pathway without obstacles that lies at the very threshold of enlightenment, one follows the path of supreme passion that confers empowerment into the fruition state, the empowerment that refines away the subtle habitual patterns associated with the progression of the three successive steps of subtle experience.⁶³¹ This brings mastery of the state of the glorious Samantabhadra; which is to say, the totality of the four kāyas and five aspects of timeless awareness, the very essence of spontaneous presence, and the inseparability of the twenty-five factors of the fruition state⁶³² of primordial unity that requires no more training. [4.165.a] Thus, one can act to benefit those to be guided through enlightened activities that are ever-present, all-pervasive, and spontaneously accomplished. The *Synopsis* states:

The fruition, in truth, is perfect buddhahood.

There are countless factors subsumed within twenty-five of form, speech, mind, qualities, and activity.

This is omniscience, spontaneously present and complete.⁶³³

Each of the ten levels has its corresponding set of circumstances, such as those levels that pertain to the situation in which one directs one’s will. In these ten sets of circumstances, one meditates with a process specific to that level (a process that accords to some degree with the actual nature

of phenomena, the very essence of things just as it is), so that one progresses in stages. Each of the ten levels has its specific factor to be refined away; these are, respectively, (1) the more obvious and (2) the more subtle habitual patterns of karma, which function as conditioning factors;⁶³⁴ (3) the more obvious, (4) the less obvious, and (5) the more subtle habitual patterns that account for overt behavior; (6) the omnipresent factors;⁶³⁵ (7) the indwelling obscurations;⁶³⁶ and (8) the more obvious, (9) the less obvious, and (10) the more subtle latent obscurations.⁶³⁷ One is purified of these successively and so brought to higher and higher levels through the ten aspects of bodhicitta (bodhicitta as directedness and so forth). The traversal of these ten aspects is discussed at great length in the principal sūtra, explanatory tantras, and pith instructions⁶³⁸—for example, the second chapter of the source tantra the *All-Embracing Intent*—in conjunction with ten analogies, such as that of a tiny star.

The Paths and Levels of Atiyoga [IV]

The explanation of the Atiyoga approach (the tradition based on pith instructions⁶³⁹) has four topics: an explanation in connection with the innate purity imbuing the four stages of empowerment; an explanation relating this to the way in which the four visions unfold; a concise presentation of the qualities associated with those visions; and an explanation of conduct, that is, the way in there is ongoing immersion in genuine being.

Empowerment in Atiyoga [A]

This explanation has two topics: a general presentation of how the spiritual path relates to the process of empowerment, and a specific explanation of the way in which four levels specific to masters of awareness are attained.

Path and Empowerment [1]

The paths and levels of Ati transcend developmental effort.

Nonetheless, within the four stages of empowerment found in the extraordinary secret cycles,

some sixteen subdivisions of the aspects of manifest realization are differentiated.

The same is true for the levels of dedicated interest, involvement, transformation, and decisiveness.

Together these are thirty-two factors. Timeless awareness is analyzed into four aspects [4.165.b] of abiding, awakening, attainment, and arising, giving sixty-four factors that contribute to the perfection of the sublime level of Vajradhara.

In this effortless approach of Atiyoga, the state of utter lucidity is made fully evident in one's experience, and so one is already engaged in lower approaches (primordially so); this approach transcends the concerted effort required to traverse some graduated path, or to follow some step-by-step process of refinement. So the Dzogchen, or Great Perfection, approach is said to consist of a single level and to require no process of refining away or traversing anything, for the intention underlying this statement is that when the higher approach is completed, the lower ones are completed as a matter of course. The single level referred to is that of pure and spontaneously present awareness. As the *All-Creating Monarch* states:

The level of pure and spontaneously perfect awareness,
uncontrived and unrefined.⁶⁴⁰

Nevertheless, even in this specific path it is necessary for one to be purified of distortions affecting the three avenues of one's being, of the physical body, of thoughts stirring the mind, and of the more obvious expressions of the interaction between subtle energy and mind. When one is purified of these, the paths and levels of lower approaches are completed as a matter of course; therefore, while the Dzogchen approach parallels these lower approaches, it is far superior to them, for on its single level are all the factors of manifest realization that can be differentiated as aspects of timeless awareness and the qualities of enlightenment. A systematic presentation of these factors is discussed in the tantras of the extraordinary secret cycles. According to these discussions, generally speaking, the bases on which this path is completed are the four stages of empowerment, the

elaborate one and the rest.⁶⁴¹ Within these four stages of empowerment, however, there are some sixteen subdivisions (the elaborate subdivision of the elaborate empowerment and the other subdivisions) that are discussed below; these serve as the bases for perfecting the qualities associated with the causal, or more ordinary, levels.

There are also sixteen subdivisions to four distinctive levels: those of dedicated interest; engagement; transformation; and decisiveness. Each of these has its internal subdivisions, such as the dedicated interest of dedicated interest. If we add the former and the latter subdivisions together, we arrive at a total of thirty-two factors, which are said to serve as the causes for one to attain Vajradhara's thirty-two distinctive and sublime marks of perfection.

In the case of each of the sixteen subdivisions of the special levels, timeless awareness can be analyzed into four aspects termed "abiding," "awakening," "attainment," and "arising." This gives a total of sixty-four factors, which are described as perfecting the sublime levels of Vajradhara. [4.166.a]

Generally speaking, the way in which the path is completed through the four stages of empowerment is as follows: The elaborate empowerment serves as the basis for the attainment of the qualities that are associated with completing the twelve steps on the path of accumulation. The unelaborate empowerment serves as the basis for completing the four phases that anticipate the decisive breakthrough on the path of linkage. The extremely unelaborate empowerment serves as the basis for completing the path of seeing. The utterly unelaborate empowerment serves as the basis for completing the nine levels of the path on meditation.

The sixteen subdivisions within the four stages of empowerment serve to purify one on the outer level of sixteen influences exerted by the elements, on the inner level of sixteen thought patterns in the mind, and on the secret level of sixteen unstable fluctuations of bindu. This being the case, these sixteen empowerments are acknowledged since they contribute to one's gaining the certainty of abiding on the corresponding sixteen levels of the unsurpassable approach.

As to how the sixteen empowerments correspond to the four special levels, the elaborate subdivision of the elaborate empowerment corresponds to the special level on which one is endowed with dedicated interest: one is distinguished by one's yearning and merit. The unelaborate subdivision of this empowerment corresponds to the level of pure engagement: by

relying on a certainty born of one's faith, one becomes involved with a growing sense of self-determination. The extremely unelaborate subdivision of this empowerment corresponds to the level of the transformation of things into their purest form: one is no longer caught up in the bonds of ordinary body and speech. The utterly unelaborate subdivision of this empowerment corresponds to the level of the decisive termination of karma: one is no longer caught up in conceptual structures and cyclic existence. A similar correspondence applies to the subdivisions of the remaining three empowerments.

As to the detailed analysis of the sixteen levels and what they constitute in essence:

- (1) the dedicated phase of dedicated interest constitutes the certainty born of faith;
- (2) the involved phase of dedicated interest constitutes the certainty of compassion;
- (3) the transformative phase of dedicated interest constitutes the application of skillful means;
- (4) the decisive phase of dedicated interest constitutes the decisiveness concerning what is truly meaningful that is arrived at through sublime intelligence;
- (5) the dedicated phase of engagement constitutes a dedicated interest in developing calm abiding;
- (6) the involved phase of engagement constitutes engagement in developing deeper insight;
- (7) the transformative phase of engagement constitutes the transformation of the realization gained in meditative equipoise into distinct states;
- (8) the decisive phase of engagement constitutes the decisive arrest of thoughts stirring in the mind during postmeditation;
- (9) the dedicated phase of transformation constitutes freedom from fixation on clothing oneself;
- (10) the involved phase of transformation constitutes freedom from fixation on food; [4.166.b]
- (11) the transformative phase of transformation constitutes freeing the dream state into that of utter lucidity;
- (12) the decisive phase of transformation constitutes freedom from habitual patterns and afflictive states;

- (13) the dedicated phase of decisiveness is one in which, due to one's conduct, one is no longer caught in cyclic existence;
- (14) the involved phase of decisiveness is one in which, due to one's meditation, one abides in meditative stability;
- (15) the transformative phase of decisiveness is one in which, due to one's view, one is no longer caught up in perceptions based on confusion but can transform one's experience of the three realms into that of the three kâyas; and
- (16) the decisive phase of decisiveness constitutes the fruition state, in which one eradicates both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa at one and the same time.

Four Levels of Masters of Awareness [2]

Immersion in genuine being, supreme immersion, analysis, and realization:

each is further analyzed into four subdivisions, giving sixteen levels of masters of awareness.

These are causal levels, attained through recollection of the four stages of empowerment.

The four levels referred to are those of the level of immersion in genuine being,⁶⁴² the level of supreme immersion, the level of immersion in analytical discernment, and the level of immersion in realization. In a general context, these are further divided into eight: two aspects, transformative or nontransformative, for each level. But they may be analyzed more precisely into four aspects for each level: The first level involves four subdivisions, termed "immersion in genuine being," "immersion in genuine action," "immersion in genuine conduct," and "immersion in genuine transformation." The second level involves four subdivisions, termed "the level of total immersion in genuine being," "the level of immersion in genuine certainty of one's natural state," "the level of immersion in conceptual elaboration," and "the level of immersion in perfect freedom from anything needing to be done." The third level involves four subdivisions, termed "the level of symbol," "the level of meaning," "the level of the inseparability of symbol and meaning," and "the level of their distinctness." The fourth level involves four subdivisions, termed "the level of exercising miraculous powers," "the level of special realization," "the level

of manifest onset,” and “the level of ascertaining the hero’s birthright.”

Taken together, these subdivisions constitute some sixteen levels. On these sixteen levels, moreover, on the first level one can demonstrate seven miraculous powers of discerning consciousness; from this level up to the fifteenth, one can demonstrate seven further powers on each level; and someone on the sixteenth level is capable of demonstrating nineteen kinds of spiritual miracles. Thus, one gains mastery of more than one hundred miraculous powers. [4.167.a] These are called “the levels of masters of awareness.” They are causal levels that are attained through one’s recollection in the wake of the four stages of empowerment.

Four Visions of Atiyoga [B]

The second explanation, relating the foregoing to the way in which the visions unfold, has two topics: an explanation of some sixteen stages of visionary experience, and an explanation of the sixteen levels.

Sixteen Visions of Atiyoga [1]

The four visions each involve stages of manifestation, increase, attainment, and complete attainment, so the levels of the visions associated with the fruition are sixteen measures in one’s experience of timeless awareness.

In each of the four visions (that of the direct experience of the actual nature of phenomena and the rest⁶⁴³) there are four stages: those of manifestation, increase, attainment, and complete attainment. So there are, in fact, some sixteen stages of visionary experience; these serve as measures of one’s experience maturing into that of timeless awareness, and so they are termed “the fruition levels of the protector Vajradhara.”

These sixteen stages of visionary experience are, in their essence, as follows:

As for the vision of the direct experience of the actual nature of phenomena:⁶⁴⁴

- (1) one’s eyes allow the onset of its manifestation;
- (2) the very nature of the visual faculty constitutes a further degree of increase;

- (3) the perception of the “chain formation”⁶⁴⁵ constitutes its attainment; and
- (4) the gaining of familiarity with that constitutes a further degree of attainment.

As for the vision of the enrichment of meditative experience:⁶⁴⁶

- (5) light constitutes the onset of its manifestation;
- (6) spheres of light constitute a further degree of increase;
- (7) the clear vision of spheres of five colors constitutes its attainment; and
- (8) their vibrating and shimmering, giving off rays of light, constitutes a further degree of attainment.

As for the vision of pure awareness reaching full expression:⁶⁴⁷

- (9) enlightened forms constitute the onset of its manifestation;
- (10) the appearance of these as masculine and feminine forms in union constitutes a further degree of increase;
- (11) their arrangement in groupings of five constitutes its attainment; and
- (12) the perfect appearance of the maṇḍala constitutes a further degree of attainment.

As for the vision of resolution:⁶⁴⁸

- (13) one's awareness not remaining focused on the forms and the aspects of timeless awareness constitutes the onset of its manifestation;
- (14) emptiness without any fixed reference point constitutes a further degree of increase;
- (15) the inexpressible state constitutes its attainment; and
- (16) the experience of the actual nature of phenomena, which cannot be objectified or found to exist as anything whatsoever, constitutes a further degree of attainment.

These, then, are the sixteen stages.

Sixteen Levels of Atiyoga [2]

Perception of truth, recognition, familiarity, luminous vision,
timeless awareness, enlightened form in full evidence,
consummation, unwavering state, perfection of qualities,
tranquil state, group formations, nonattachment,

circles, abiding vision, gaining of certainty, and the level of original purity:

on that level there is nothing higher than tranquil timeless awareness.

Beginning with the level of The Utterly Joyful One, up to that of Total Illumination, The Lotus-Bearing One, [4.167.b]

The Circles of Letters, Meditative Absorption, The Vajra Holder, and Unsurpassable Timeless Awareness,

these levels are all approached in a similar manner, but because they are visions

of a single state of utter lucidity, they are not the ten ordinary levels.

Thus, the sixteen stages that are termed “causal” or “fruition” levels, moreover, are complete in either of two situations: that of one’s gaining freedom in a body of light in this lifetime, and that of one’s gaining freedom in the intermediate state after death. *Naturally Arising Awareness* states:

What are termed “levels” do not, in fact, exist in and of themselves. In a single individual who has perceived truth the levels⁶⁴⁹ are present, having been thus completed. When individuals who have been introduced to their true nature first perceive the truth, this arouses in them a sense of joy; this is the first level, that of The Utterly Joyful One.

Next, they understand what they perceive to be awareness’s own manifestation; they attain the second level, that of The Immaculate One.

Next, they become familiar with that recognition; they master the third level, that of The Illuminating One.

Next, having become familiar with that, they perceive the luminous visions; they master⁶⁵⁰ the fourth level, that of The Radiant One.

Next, due to their familiarity with their perception of these visions of timeless awareness, they naturally refine away all⁶⁵¹ afflictive states and experience timeless awareness; they master the fifth level, that of The One Who Meets the Challenge.

Next, they experience a body formed of light becoming fully evident; they master the sixth level, that of The One Who Makes Evident.

Next, their familiarity reaches consummation, so that they have gone far beyond afflictive states; they master the seventh level, that of The One Who Has Gone Far.

Next, they do not waver⁶⁵² from that context⁶⁵³; they master the eighth level, that of The Immutable One.

Next, their qualities become perfected; they master the ninth level, that of The One of Brilliant Intelligence.

Next, their own awareness apprehends the visions of timeless awareness, leading to the experience of tranquillity. They see all phenomena to be like clouds and become familiar with this insight; they master the tenth level, that of The Cloud of Dharma.

The foregoing situation is of those individuals who have perceived truth but not yet cast off the physical envelope. Individuals who have cast this envelope off do not master⁶⁵⁴ levels in quite this way. [4.168.a] Having brought perceptions based on confusion to an end, they experience visions of forms in group formations; they master the eleventh level, that of Total Illumination.

Next, having no attachment to these visions, they are untarnished by any phenomenon experienced outwardly or inwardly; they master the twelfth level, that of The Lotus-Bearing One.

Next, they experience rays of light shining from their heart centers, manifesting as clusters of five-colored light, like circles spinning, high up in space; they master the thirteenth level, that of The Supreme Assembly of the Circles of Letters.

Next, they abide in the visions of timeless awareness; they master the fourteenth level, that of Supreme Meditative Absorption.⁶⁵⁵

Next, they gain certainty concerning the level of spontaneous presence; they attain the fifteenth level, that of The Vajra Holder.

Then, they comprehend the level of original purity to be tranquil timeless awareness and that there is nothing higher

than this; they attain the sixteenth level, that of Unsurpassable Timeless Awareness.⁶⁵⁶

As this passage indicates, one is brought in stages from the first level, that of The Utterly Joyful One (the direct experience that constitutes perception of the Truth of the Path), to the eleventh, that of Total Illumination, and thence to the special levels such as The Lotus-Bearing One. However, although they are all approached in a similar manner from the point of view of how they manifest in one's experience, fundamentally these levels are distinguished from the perspective of their being aspects of the manifestation of a single level of utterly lucid awareness, which involves neither training nor traversal. Given that there is just a single level in actuality, that of awareness, in order for one to attain the buddhahood of Vajradhara there is no need to train deliberately and specifically in the causal levels. These levels are not the ten actual bodhisattva levels. Therefore, according to the ordinary approach there is a way in which one attains each level through a developmental process of cause and effect, while in the outer and inner tantric approaches these are attained through effort and achievement in the stages of development and completion; in this case, however, there is nothing to attain or in which to train. The same source states:

Therefore, although there is an inconceivable number of beings, there is no more than a single timeless awareness that is their essence. What are termed "paths" and "levels" do not, in fact, exist in and of themselves. [4.168.b] One should understand that there is no need to train on, or traverse, paths and levels.⁶⁵⁷

Qualities in Atiyoga [C]

Nevertheless, with the expansion of pathways of light in the central channel,
once the first two blockages in the subtle channels dissolve into light,
one experiences such qualities as the "twelve hundredfold."
With this enhancement, manifest aspects of realization arise effortlessly as awareness's own manifestations.

Notwithstanding the foregoing discussion, in this approach the key point of the exceptionally superior instructions involved allow the subtle energies to settle into a naturally quiescent state. This leads to a natural purification of the respective subtle energies in the secondary channels, at which point the subtle energy of timeless awareness that is associated with the subtle pathways of light is naturally lucid in its natural state, so that there is only pure perception, that is, the enlightened forms and pure realms that constitute the visions of timeless awareness. There is no opportunity for perceptions based on confusion to arise, only that which is of the nature of light. Pathways of light in the central channel expand, so that those factors that take the form of blockages in the subtle channels gradually dissolve into light; the benefit of this is felt in manifest aspects of one's realization arising as awareness's own manifestations.

With the first pair of blockages dissolving into light, what one perceives outwardly is the arising, within a field of light, of hundreds of pure buddha realms, each giving off rays of light. One "journeys" to them in the sense that they are subsumed within awareness as its own manifestations. As one's body moves, this causes a hundred realms to move. Inwardly, one enters into, and arises out of, a hundred nonconceptual states of meditative absorption on the actual nature of phenomena. As the foregoing indicates, one experiences such qualities as the twelve distinctive hundredfold qualities. Extraordinary indications of one's realization increase more and more and, due to this enhancement, exceptionally superior manifest aspects of one's realization are experienced as arising effortlessly, as awareness's own manifestations.

Conduct in Atiyoga [D]

Conduct as ongoing immersion in genuine being can be at the beginning stage, in delineating the gap, and in pursuing the path of spiritual deportment.

Of the latter's twenty-one aspects, one engages primarily in seven, such as that like a bee's, and gains mastery of all one perceives.

The tantra *Naturally Arising Awareness* discusses some twelve themes of conduct, such as the "yoga of words on the level of characterizing things."⁶⁵⁸ It is said that the first eight of these apply to those who have not

yet gained the level of primordial freedom, [4.169.a] while the last four (the yoga of the consummate fruition state, the yoga of authentic meaning, the yoga of consummate freedom, and the yoga of the perfection of all that is to be done) apply to the attainment of that level of freedom. The significance of what such a yogic practitioner is putting into practice lies in the four yogas of continually ensuring view, meditation, conduct, and fruition. The way in which these four are put into practice entails some twenty topics, which are discussed in the tantras the *Array of Inset Gems* and the *Heaped Jewels*.

Here, however, let us speak concisely about conduct in the sense of an ongoing immersion in genuine being. In this case, there are three ways to see conduct as timely in that it defines (and is defined by) one's level of progress:

(1) the conduct of a beginning practitioner is that of training gradually in the ten kinds of spiritual practice;

(2) the conduct that delineates the gap between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is that of distinguishing saṃsāra from nirvāṇa, by putting these profound instructions into practice and by engaging in physical, verbal, and mental conduct as preliminaries to the third empowerment; one then restores oneself through the conduct of settling into a state of genuine being; and

(3) the conduct of pursuing the path of spiritual deportment is explained in the tantra the *Conjunction of Sun and Moon* in twenty-one ways.⁶⁵⁹

Of these twenty-one aspects of conduct, in this present context one engages primarily in the first seven aspects (for example, conduct like that of a bee).

In this regard, the first aspect is that of gathering all spiritual methods together and pursuing the goal of practicing them in an integrated manner in light of one's immediate experience. This is like a bee seeking out its hive. By hearing teachings, one can distinguish between what is spiritual and what is not; by contemplating them, one realizes their meaning and suppresses afflictive states; by meditating, one rests in the immediacy of that realization and definitively uproots these afflictive states.

As a support for that, there is conduct that is without doubt, like that of a dove. Before that species of bird returns to its nest, it first determines that there are no potentially harmful humans present and so approaches with no indecision. Similarly, having already eradicated speculation by

hearing and contemplating spiritual teachings, one puts into practice the pith instructions one has come to trust.

As a support for that, there is conduct like that of a wild deer, which is not conduct suitable for everyone. [4.169.b] Still concerned about lapsing back into saṃsāra, the yogic practitioner practices while dwelling alone on a mountain unfrequented by people, like a wounded deer that stays off by itself.

As a support for that, there is the conduct like that of a mute; one observes silence, not conversing with anyone. When one acts thus, one's mind becomes rather tight, so the conduct like that of a madman follows as a matter of course; like those of a madman, one's physical, verbal, and mental actions have no fixed point of reference. At this point, the conduct like that of a dog or pig, with no attitude of what is clean or unclean, follows as a matter of course; one partakes of food and clothing without picking and choosing.

When these six aspects of conduct have been completed, there follows the conduct like that of a lion, in which one is not overshadowed by anyone else but can overshadow everyone else. Just as a lion has no fear or anxiety toward anything or anyone whatsoever, the yogic practitioner is free of all harm due to anything that is perceived or any influence human or otherwise, and so becomes capable of exercising mastery in any situation whatsoever.

If we apply a label to the foregoing aspects of conduct, they are collectively termed "conduct that brings mastery of the phenomenal world." This is due to that fact that one becomes capable of converting those without faith and resuscitating those who have been killed, gains miraculous powers, and deepens one's experience of the actual nature of phenomena. Like someone under the influence of alcohol, one is unrestrained and free of hope and fear, becoming capable of mastering the four elements.⁶⁶⁰

Summary [V]

According to individual spiritual instructions, the ways in which the paths and levels are traversed are beyond enumerating; the fundamentals are summarized here.

In conjunction with the graduated path taught in the individual spiritual instructions that were famous in India and Tibet, many ways developed

of explaining how the paths and levels are traversed on the outer and inner levels. Here I have dealt with these succinctly, and although these systems are beyond enumeration the fundamental principles have been summarized in the foregoing four parts.

*The foregoing constitutes the commentary on the fourth part,
concerning a detailed treatment of the paths and levels
in the three yogas of the Early Translation School's approach.*

[4.170.a]

*This concludes the commentary on the ninth book,
an analysis of the paths and levels to be traversed,
from The Encompassing of All Knowledge,
also entitled The Precious Treasury of Sublime Teachings:
The Compendium of the Methods of All Spiritual Approaches
and A Treatise That Thoroughly Presents the Three Higher Trainings.*

BOOK TEN:

An Analysis of the Consummate Fruition State

. . . .

THE SOURCE VERSES

Part I. The Fruition in the Dialectical Approach

Nirvāṇa according to the Three Spiritual Approaches [I]

Nirvāṇa is the fruition to be attained through the three spiritual approaches.

Nirvāṇa as the natural state is the suchness of phenomena.

Nirvāṇa as a state of cessation is either nominal (attained through devoted intent)

or authentic (attained through the paths of seeing and meditation), the latter being incomplete on the path of training and complete on that of no more training.

Nonlimited nirvāṇa does not fall into the extreme of either conditioned existence or personal salvation.

Buddhahood according to the Mahāyāna [II]

Nature of Buddhahood [A]

Endowed with three supreme properties, . . .

Meaning of the Term “Buddha” [B]

. . . buddhahood is comparable to a lotus.

Process of Accomplishment [C]

Causes [1]

Once the development of merit has been completed through bodhicitta,

the fully matured fruition is the accomplishment of the rūpakāyas, while dharmakāya is the fruition of divestment through a deepening of the experience of timeless awareness.

Environment and Process [2]

That is to say, in the pinnacle pure realm of supreme Akaniṣṭha, dharmakāya makes itself evident on the basis of the sambhogakāya.

Throughout the three-thousandfold universe, nirmāṇakāyas simultaneously demonstrate the way to enlightenment. As the consummation of both kinds of benefit, the two kāyas are support and supported.

They do not exist as actual things and so do not manifest, yet are present and so do manifest, bringing enjoyment of all one could desire. Thus they constitute liberation.

Fruition [3]

Kāyas [a]

Characteristics [i]

Dharmakāya [aa]

Meaning and Characteristics [1#]

The basic space of phenomena, endowed with all inexhaustible qualities of enlightenment,

is the supportive kāya that is the actual nature of phenomena, imbued with twofold purity.

It has eight characteristics: evenness, profundity, continuity, uniqueness, authenticity, immaculacy, utter lucidity, and perfect connectedness.

Analysis [2#]

Some assign the perfection of the process of elimination to svabhāvikakāya and the perfection of the process of realization to dharmakāya.

Sambhogakāya [bb]**Meaning and Characteristics [1#]**

Sambhogakāya, in the realm of Ghanavyūha,⁶⁶¹ is adorned with major and minor marks of perfect form.

There is uninterrupted enjoyment of the Mahāyāna teachings in the company of spiritually advanced beings.

It has eight characteristics: retinue, realm, embodiment, marks, teaching, deeds, spontaneous presence, and absence of independent nature.

Analysis [2#]

It can be analyzed as either greater and lesser, or actual and nominal. There are three opinions based on uniqueness, distinctness, and gradation.

Nirmāṇakāya [cc]**Meaning and Characteristics [1#]**

For as long as saṃsāra endures and for the sake of beings, nirmāṇakāya emanates

in various ways, ensuring benefit. It has eight characteristics: support, cause, realms, time frame, nature, edification, maturation, and freedom.

Analysis [2#]

Nirmāṇakāyas of skill, birth, and sublimity reveal themselves through enlightened deeds.

The Presentation in the *Highest Continuum* [dd]

In the *Highest Continuum*, there is discussion of the essence as one of immaculacy, presence, bliss, and constancy, and of the three kāyas each being characterized as having five attributes.

Specific Features [ii]

Equalness [aa]

There is equalness of support, enlightened intent, and enlightened activity.

Constancy [bb]

There is constancy due to nature, an unimpaired quality, and continuity.

Manifestation [cc]

There is manifestation due to their being pure of cognitive, afflictive, and karmic obscurations.

Timeless Awareness [b]

Detailed Analysis [i]

Timeless awareness, as what is supported, consists of five incorruptible ways of knowing.

Meaning of the Terms and Essential Qualities [ii]

Awareness as the Basic Space of Phenomena [aa]

Awareness as the basic space of phenomena constitutes nonduality, threefold freedom, and nonconceptuality.

Mirrorlike Awareness [bb]

Without ordinary fixated perception, there is the manifestation of all objects of knowledge as though in a mirror.

Awareness as Equalness [cc]

Pure meditation is the equalness of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

Discerning Awareness [dd]

Discerning awareness of things in all their multiplicity is the avenue to meditative absorption and the power of recall.

Awareness as Ensured Fulfillment [ee]

Ensured fulfillment lies in the manifold display of countless skillful means.

Causes [iii]

Experience of these aspects comes about by one's eliminating faults through such activities as hearing teachings; retaining the teachings; meditating on equalness; presenting teachings; and ensuring others' welfare.

Transformation [iv]

The emptiness and lucidity of consciousness as the basis of all ordinary experience, the afflictive aspect of consciousness, consciousness as the coordinating mental faculty, and the five sense consciousnesses—their transformation constitutes the very essence of being itself.

Association with the Kāyas [v]

A pair of aspects is subsumed in each of the first two kāyas, with ensured fulfillment subsumed in *nirmāṇakāya*.

Because they transcend the ordinary intellect, they are free of such conceptual elaboration as being existent or nonexistent.

In their true nature they are nonmanifest; their way of manifesting is merely by way of interdependence; these ways of knowing are beyond the ordinary mind's comprehension.

The Qualities of Enlightenment [c]

Overview [i]

While the qualities of enlightenment are limitless, they can be summarized as twofold: due to divestment and maturation.

Extensive Explanation [ii]

Divestment [aa]

The Intent of the *Highest Continuum* [1#]

On the ultimate level, there are thirty-two qualities due to divestment.

The Ten Powers [a#]

Knowledge of appropriateness, consequences, capacity, temperament, aspiration, destiny, afflictive states versus enlightenment, recollection, birth and death, and the end of all that is corruptible—the ten powers of knowledge are like a vajra, overcoming obscurations.

The Four States of Fearlessness [b#]

Concerning enlightenment, the end of what is corruptible, declaration, and the path of the will to be free, there is fearlessness, like that of a lion, in teaching to bring the two kinds of benefit.

The Eighteen Distinctive Qualities [c#]

Six each falling under conduct and realization, three each under deeds and knowledge: the eighteen qualities that distinguish buddhas from others are comparable to space.

The Intent of the *Ornament of Manifest Realization* [2#]

In a more detailed way, there are twenty-one categories of incorruptibility:

the factors that contribute to enlightenment, the immeasurable attitudes, the modes of liberation, the stages of meditative equipoise, the states of total immersion, the sense fields that eclipse ordinary perceptions, the absence of afflictive states, wisdom born of aspiration, the levels of deeper discernment, the states of authentic discernment, the four aspects of complete purity, the kinds of control, the powers, the four states of fearlessness, the factors that need not be closely guarded, the applications of mindfulness, the absence of oblivion, the overcoming of habitual patterns, supreme innate compassion, the distinctive qualities, and omniscience.

Maturation [bb]

Overview [1#]

The two kinds of rūpakāya are like the moon in the sky and its reflection in water.

Their qualities, which are due to complete spiritual maturation, are manifest yet cannot be found to exist as such.

Extensive Explanation [2#]

There are thirty-two marks, such as soles that are exceedingly level and marked with wheels,

and eighty, such as nails that are copper colored, glossy, and raised.

A supreme being is adorned with these major and minor marks of perfect form.

Enlightened speech is endowed with sixty melodious qualities.

The Thirty-two Major Marks of Perfect Form [a#]

The Eighty Minor Marks of Perfect Form [b#]

The Sixty Qualities of Enlightened Speech [c#]

Enlightened Activity [d]

Seven Ramifications of Enlightened Deeds [i]

Enlightened activity is spontaneously accomplished, without bias or distinction,

integrated, uninterrupted, a myriad array of skillful methods,
in accord with an individual's fortune, and completely protective.

Summary [ii]

Because it presents those to be guided with the basis for the spiritual
path, the actual path,
and the consummate result, to summarize it can be subsumed under two
principles:
spontaneous accomplishment and uninterruptedness.

*The foregoing constitutes the first part,
concerning a definitive conclusion about the fruition
in the cause-based dialectical approach.*

Part 2. The More Common Attainments in the Vajrayāna Concise Presentation [I]

The results of the two stages of the mantra approach are the more common and the sublime.

In the Guhyasamāja cycle, they are attainments of mantra and of timeless awareness.

In the Kālacakra cycle, it is said that a single attainment comes from the seven empowerments,

while three kinds come from following the path of the higher empowerments.

Specific Explanations [II]

Introduction [A]

The stage of development is the application of tantric principles that primarily ensure accomplishment of enlightened activities in the short term,

as well as lesser, intermediate, or greater siddhis. . . .

Extensive Explanation [B]

Enlightened Activities [1]

. . . Pacification, enrichment, power, forceful intervention:
these are the four basic activities, with an entire range of secondary ones.
Pacifying, enriching, exercising power, summoning, slaying, banishing,
driving mad, and paralyzing:
these are well known as the eight, or twelve, major activities.

Siddhis [2]

Lesser Siddhis [a]

The eight lesser siddhis are those of pills, eye medicine, seeing underground,
the sword, the enjoyment of space, invisibility, immortality, and curing illness.

Alternatively, the eight are those of the sword, eye medicine, pills, foot ointment,
alchemical powers, magical boots, mercury, and seeing underground.

In the *Concise Tantra*, there is much discussion of such siddhis as the sword,
 the magic power of touch, alchemical powers, nectar, pills, magic
 potion,
 fleetness of foot, and other topics, such as world rulers,
 but these can be summarized as those of masters of awareness through
 material means, in a physical body, or with wealth.

Intermediate Siddhis [b]

The intermediate siddhis, which come from the common attainment of
 meditative warmth and conduct,
 are those of masters of awareness in the realm of desire, with status equal
 to that of gods in the realm of desire.
 They employ all mantras of awareness and siddhis, and have power over
 longevity.
 They possess the eight mundane qualities of powerful mastery,
 being subtle, light, governing, able to move everywhere, worthy of
 honor,
 able to ensure all that is wished for, imbued with stable joy and
 satisfaction, and possessed of mastery.
 Even though they move through this realm, ordinary people cannot see
 them.

Greater Siddhis [c]

The greater siddhis are those of sublime masters of awareness in the
 realm of desire
 and of masters of awareness in the realm of form, who engage in
 unelaborate conduct.
 With status equal to that of gods in the realm of form, their qualities are
 far superior to those.
 Their actual bodies do not appear, but they benefit beings through
 emanations.
 Through the path of masters of awareness, one gains power over
 longevity,
 and through the longevity of a master of awareness, one accomplishes
 buddhahood.

Khecara [d] Greater State [i]

In conjunction with these siddhis, the greater state of Khecara is one endowed with the eight qualities such as subtle form. The full experience of one's realization is a naturally manifesting realm of complete purity.

Lesser States [ii]

The lesser states of Khecara are seventeen associated with the realm of form, six associated with the gods of the realm of desire, and the indeterminate one associated with the human realm, which can be seen by pure yogic practitioners.

One may arrive there without discarding the physical body, or having discarded it,

or be led there by yakṣī spirits or siddhas (a temporary magical experience).

Some reach there through meditation; because this involves engaging in meditative stability

and attaining a rainbow body, they progress along the spiritual path, taking a firm stance.

*The foregoing constitutes the second part,
concerning a definitive conclusion about the more common
spiritual attainments of the mantra approach.*

Part 3. The Fruition in the Vajrayāna Fruition Aspect of Tantra [I]

The fruition aspect of tantra is accomplished through three incorruptible processes of spiritual development.
It constitutes the consummate and most sublime spiritual attainment, mahāmudrā.

Nature of the Fruition Aspect [II] Essence [A]

In essence, due to the cessation of breath and the stabilization of the masculine and feminine energies,
moon, sun, and Rāhu are free of obscurations as the three vajras.
Evaṃ means equal taste: primordial unity that has two dimensions.

Enumeration of Terms [B]

As for an enumeration of the synonymous terms for this, there are primarily twenty.
But it can be described by many others as well, as many as ten thousand.

Distinction between Actual Fruition and Nominal Result [C]

The actual fruition is supreme Vajradhara. The nominal results are those of the illusory body and of an ordinary being who has realized primordial unity;
these results, respectively, are the flawless embodiment of timeless awareness and a flawed embodiment.

Causal Factors [D] Working Basis [1]

The working basis for the causes (the aspects contributing to manifest enlightenment) is the impure illusory body.

Essence [2]

In essence, the fruition constitutes timeless awareness associated with the path of seeing,
in which the eighty overt patterns of thought have been eliminated. . . .

Methods of Application [3]

External [a]

. . . As for the methods of application, by moon and sun one meditates on the phases of “manifestation” and “increase”; with the setting of the sun, on the timeless awareness of the phase of “attainment.”

At daybreak comes enlightenment. These are the external aspects of manifest enlightenment.

Internal [b]

At twilight, one performs a gaṇacakra feast and familiarizes oneself with the ongoing experience of timeless awareness associated with the empowerment into timeless awareness. At dawn one perceives ultimate reality.

With the internal aspects contributing to manifest enlightenment, bindu, which is a product of the elements, constitutes the natural and pervasive radiance of timeless awareness when one awakens to buddhahood.

Specific Issues [4]

Even the path of the transcendent perfections depends on this ultimate state.

Conclusion [5]

In summary, having attained the state of illusory body, and relying on conduct,
within the state of utter lucidity induced by the two methods of meditative stability,

one brings the two methods of the aspects contributing to manifest enlightenment to completion, and so perceives utter lucidity in the ultimate sense.

Result [E]

Primordial Unity That Involves Training [1]

Process of Attainment [a]

Within the context purified of ordinary dualistic perception, the three successive steps of subtle experience unfold in reverse order, and primordial unity on the path of training is achieved.

One still moves in and out of that state: this tendency is only eliminated once the seventh bodhisattva level has been completed.

General Characteristics [b]

Twenty-three Aspects of Primordial Unity [i]

There is primordial unity of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa; of deeply ingrained negative emotionality and enlightenment; of the tangible and intangible; of perceived object and perceiving subject; of naïve affirmation and nihilistic denial; of compassion and emptiness; of skillful means and sublime intelligence; of what entails residual traces and what does not; of the two aspects of the lack of identity; of illusory body and utter lucidity; of instantaneous collapse and gradual dissolution; of the two levels of truth; of focus; of sleep and waking consciousness; of meditative equipoise and postmeditation; of what is substantial and nonsubstantial; of mindfulness and its absence; of bliss and emptiness; of the object and agent of action; of development and completion; of purity and impurity; and of what has form and what is formless. These are the twenty-three aspects. . . .

Thirty-one Auxiliary Aspects [ii]

. . . Thirty-one auxiliary aspects are complete.

In addition, one gains other powers, avenues of total recall, and so forth.

Summary [iii]

To summarize, manifestation and emptiness are found to be identical in essence,
the indivisibility of the kāyas and timeless awareness. This is primordial unity.

Delineation of the Level of Buddhahood [c]

Once that is attained, in reliance on the deathless kāya of timeless awareness,

one will definitely awaken to buddhahood. There are a number of variations to this delineation, however.

If one has perceived the anticipatory state of utter lucidity, one will attain nirvāṇa

during the intermediate state after death; if utter lucidity in the ultimate sense, in this lifetime.

With the consummate level of the stage of development, one arouses the realization associated with manifestation and increase;
one will definitely awaken to buddhahood in the next lifetime.

Analogies Illustrating the Vajrakāya [d]

An illusionist's trick, the reflection of the moon in water, a hallucination, a mirage,

a dream image, an echo, an optical illusion, a city of the gandharvas, a rainbow, a flash of lightning, bubbles on water, and a reflection in a mirror:

these are the twelve metaphors that illustrate the vajrakāya.

Analysis of the Kāya [e]

Without the aggregates being impaired, there is simply the kāya of timeless awareness.

With their impairment, there is the kāya of timeless awareness of a master of awareness,

involving meditative absorption, having levels of deeper discernment, engaging in conduct for the sake of beings,

not being subject to ordinary desire, enjoying supreme bliss,
transcending the usual limits of longevity,
and constituting a mental embodiment: It is endowed with these seven
distinctive attributes.

Primordial Unity That Involves No More Training [2]

Working Basis [a]

With the cessation of the three ordinary avenues of being, there is the
embodiment of timeless awareness.

Primordial unity that involves no more training becomes fully evident
on a basis that is in every respect analogous to sambhogakāya.

Occasion [b]

As for the occasion, when the external and internal aspects of manifest
enlightenment have been finalized,
to the accompaniment of offerings and omens, one attains the state of a
spiritual being of the consort of awareness.

Essence [c]

In essence pervasive and constant, . . .

Characteristics [d]

. . . characterized by supreme elimination and realization, . . .

Auxiliary Attributes [e]

Overview [i]

. . . primordial unity has thirty-nine auxiliary attributes.

Extensive Explanation [ii]

The Seven Attributes of Integration [aa]

Enjoyment of the richness of being, integration, supreme bliss,
absence of any independent nature, compassion, continuity, and absence
of cessation—

since timeless awareness that brings power over these attributes becomes familiar to one while on the path, the *kāya* attained is also endowed with these seven attributes.

The Eight Qualities of Purity [bb]

There are eight qualities due to the purity of the six elements and the solar and lunar energies.

The Eight Experiential Qualities [cc]

There are the eight experiential qualities of constancy, absence of torment,
soothing calm, oneness, bliss, immaculacy, joy, and inspiration.

The Eight Qualities of Powerful Mastery [dd]

There is powerful mastery of the three secrets, miraculous powers, omnipresence, states of being, desired goals, and arousal. . . .

The Eight Additional Attributes [ee]

. . . Subtlety and lightness are more exalted than previously.

Distinctive Attributes [f]

Kāyas [i]

Realm [aa]

Emptiness free of elaboration is the level of buddhahood;
the *bhaga* of the vajra queen is the context for awakening to
buddhahood.

Essence [bb]

In essence, the *kāyas* are the maṇḍala of timeless awareness.

Analysis [cc]

Primordial unity is singular. The two kāyas are dharmakāya and rūpakāya.

There are the three vajras, and adding the kāya of innate presence makes four.

There are the five kāyas of the five family types, and adding the universal principle makes six.

By analyzing the four kāyas into mind, speech, form, and timeless awareness,

there are sixteen; and there are other models of multiple kāyas.

Three or Four Kāyas [dd]

Dharmakāya is equalness, the nature of suchness.

Sambhogakāya is the enjoyment of full richness and the seven consummate attributes of integration.

Nirmāṇakāya is spontaneously accomplished enlightened activity.

Each of the two rūpakāyas has two further kāyas: the symbolic expression and the actuality.

The four kāyas constitute the freedom from obscuration of the four ordinary states

and the purified state of subtle energy, feminine energy, masculine energy, and ordinary consciousness.

By nature they are, respectively, unconditioned, unafflicted, liberating through compassion, and supremely blissful primordial unity.

Analysis of Family Types [ee]

Basis of Analysis [1#]

Based on the specific expressions of twenty-one aggregates, the analysis into family types of maṇḍalas accounts for an infinite range of maṇḍalas.

Analysis of Specific Expressions [2#]

The subsumed models are those of some ninety-five minor types, while the subsuming model is that of the family types of the five victorious ones,

giving one hundred family types.

Each of the five major types has five subsidiary types,
and each of these is analyzed according to the four feminine consorts,
again giving one hundred, and so on.

There are countless specific expressions. The freedom of the six elements
from obscuration

gives six family types, and these can further be subsumed within five, or
even three, types.

The dance of the many unfolds within the mood of oneness.

Nature of the Family Types [3#]

Because, in the context of the ground of being, there are the natural
manifestations of body, speech, and mind,
in the context of the fruition, the very nature of the family types is that
of supreme bliss.

Timeless Awareness [ii]

Five Aspects [aa]

Timeless awareness has five extraordinary aspects: the completely pure
analogues of the five mental poisons.

Seven Aspects [bb]

Seven Primary Aspects [1#]

Alternatively, it has seven aspects: profundity, extent, pervasiveness,
constancy,
supreme bliss, embodiment, and primordial unity. . . .

Forty Auxiliary Ramifications [2#]

. . . Its profundity entails five characteristics:
the absence of independent nature, self-knowing awareness,
absence of fluctuation, nonconceptuality, and clear manifestation.
Its vast extent applies to merit, timeless awareness, environment,
scope,
involvement, enlightened activity, and so forth.

Its pervasiveness applies to space, time, continua, emptiness, and equalness.

Its constancy entails its being uninterrupted, without cessation, without subtle traits, unchanging, and inconceivable.

Its bliss has seven ramifications: the three of integration, naturalness, compassion, and the dissolution of conceptual mind and subtle energy, “melting,” and inexhaustibility.

Its embodiment has seven ramifications: born of emptiness, entailing the cessation of suffering, omnipresent, unwavering, being an embodiment of mind and subtle energy, emanating in an instant, and epitomizing major and minor marks of perfection.

Its primordial unity has six ramifications: having no dualistic framework, nonconceptual, appreciating reality just as it is, involving no ordinary perception, ensuring benefit, and never wavering.

Ten Extraordinary Aspects of Knowledge [cc]

In addition, it sustains ten completely pure aspects of knowledge and so forth.

The Qualities and Activity of Enlightenment [g]

Its qualities and activity can be understood from the previous explanation.

In brief, the fruition entails three supreme principles and two qualities, that of being ongoing and constant presences, and that of being as pervasive as space.

*The foregoing constitutes the third part,
concerning a definitive conclusion about the consummate fruition
in the Vajrayāna.*

Part 4. The Fruition in the Nyingma School

Fruition Aspect of Tantra according to the *Web of Magical Display* [I] General Presentation [A]

In the tradition of the *Web of Magical Display*, what is to be understood is the fruition aspect of tantra.

Detailed Treatment [B]

Benefit for Oneself [I]

Accomplishment [a]

The full experience of the very ground of being, just as it is, is free of any elimination or attainment:

it is the innate manifestation of the maṇḍala of kāyas and timeless awareness.

Characteristics [b]

It is characterized as being already free of limitations without these having to be eliminated,
and equal in taste to the enlightened intent of all victorious ones, like water poured into water.

Enumerations [c]

Terms [i]

As for an enumeration of the terms, these are “sugata,” “buddha,” and so forth.

Essential Categories [ii]

Distinctive Features [aa]

Extensive Enumeration [I#]

In essence, the ever-present aspects of the kāyas and so forth are unimaginable.

Middle-Length Enumeration [2#]

The enumeration includes dharmakāya, sambhogakāya, nirmāṇakāya,
[4.217.b]

unchanging vajrakāya, and abhisambodhikāya.

The five aspects of enlightened speech are those of the ultimate unborn nature, the symbolic expression of enlightened intent, the utterance of words, the vajra state of inseparability, and manifest enlightenment.

The five sublime aspects of enlightened mind are those of nonconceptuality, equalness, the liberation of beings, indivisibility, and knowledge of anything whatsoever.

Realms of complete purity, immeasurable mansions free of fixed dimensions, pure and radiant luminosity, distinctive seats, and the wealth of all delights:

these are the five aspects of the qualities of enlightenment.

Enlightened activities are those of pacification, enrichment, power, wrath, and spontaneous presence.

Concise Enumeration [3#]**Concise Enumeration [a#]**

The features can be subsumed within the kāyas, speech, mind, qualities, and activity.

Extremely Concise Enumeration [b#]**Brief Presentation [i#]**

Alternatively, there are the two categories of the kāyas and timeless awareness.

More Extensive Presentation [ii#]**Kāyas [aa#]**

The five kāyas are identical in their spontaneous presence, yet manifest as though distinct.

Timeless Awareness [bb#]

The five supported aspects of timeless awareness are the transmuted analogues of the basis of experience as the true ground and as true linkage,
the afflictive aspect of consciousness, conceptual mind, and the five sensory avenues.

Inseparability [bb]

Because the twenty-five factors entailed in the fruition can be summarized as the qualities of the “sixth,”
they are inseparable in their very essence of spontaneous presence.

Benefit for Others [2]

One perceives in three ways that involve nonconceptual, yet naturally lucid perception.
Innate compassion is aroused as an ever-present flow, as a natural force, as an invoked presence, and in response to an object.
Like a gem, this acts to ensure spontaneously present benefit for beings.

Buddhahood in the Sūtras and Tantras [3]

Dharmakāya [a]

Dharmakāya involves three topics: essence, characteristics, and blessing.

Sambhogakāya [b]

Sambhogakāya involves what can be experienced and the means for experiencing it.

Nirmāṇakāya [c]

Nirmāṇakāya involves those to be guided and the means to guide.
Gyalwa Yungtön analyzed the distinctions between the dialectical and tantric interpretations.

Gaining Freedom according to the Vajra Heart Essence of Utter Lucidity [II]

Levels of Acumen [A]

Overview [I]

According to the “vajra pinnacle,” there are specific degrees of acumen.

Extensive Explanation [2]

Lesser Acumen [a]

For those of lesser acumen, there is a tendency that carries over into the intermediate state of becoming, from which they are inspired to attain naturally occurring *nirmāṇakāya* pure realms.

Middling Acumen [b]

For those of middling acumen, there is a fourfold dissolution process in the intermediate state of the actual nature of phenomena.

When eight modes of arising, states of recollection, levels of deeper discernment,

powers of complete recall, and states of meditative absorption ensue, freedom is gained through eight modes of dissolution, in accord with twenty levels of acumen.

Higher Acumen [c]

For those of higher acumen, there is disintegration on the level of primordial resolution,

like the passing of a *ḍākinī*, like the passing of a master of awareness, like a roaring fire, like space.

All these cases, however, are identical within the precious and secret embrace.

Supreme Freedom [B]**Manifest Enlightenment [I]****Essence [a]**

The kāyas and timeless awareness are inseparable: the three kāyas of enlightenment, in essence, constitute original purity, spontaneous presence, and the occurrence of whatever serves to guide beings.

Derivation of Terminology [b]

The derivation of terms for these is that they signify the unity of emptiness and lucidity, perfection of what is clearly evident, and harmonious manifestation.

Characteristics [c]

Their characteristics are those of being beyond imagining, lucid yet involving no concepts, and revealing a myriad array.

Nature [d]

Their natures are those of emptiness, lucidity, and unceasing overt manifestation.

Mode of Abiding [e]

The mode of their abiding is comparable to that of space, a rainbow, and an illusion.

Pure Realms [f]

Their pure realms are those of original purity, timeless awareness, and the manifestation of animate and inanimate universes.

Those to Be Guided [g]

Those to be guided are those of complete purity, those who are awareness's own natural manifestations, and the six classes of ordinary beings.

All of these situations, furthermore, are endowed with fivefold excellence.

Function [h]

The function of the kāyas is that of not straying, being spontaneously present, and being like reflections of the moon in water.

Constancy [i]

The measure of indwelling confidence lies in a freedom from elaboration, a natural lucidity, and the ensuring of two kinds of benefit.

Detailed Analysis [j]**Overview of the Three Kāyas [i]**

To analyze them, the three kāyas each constitute a fivefold continuum of inexhaustible adornment, which means that, generally speaking, there are certainly fifteen categories of enlightened being.

Detailed Analysis of the Distinct Expressions of the Three Kāyas [ii]

As for the detailed analysis of the nature of their distinct expressions, dharmakāya can be analyzed into aspects of dharmakāya, sambhogakāya, and nirmāṇakāya; as can the rest.

This gives nine categories, each with its pure realm, environment, meditative absorption, retinue, teaching, and occasion.

Nature of Timeless Awareness [2]

Essence [a]

Timeless awareness abides as the heart essence of being, which is a primordial quality of knowing.

Derivation of the Term [b]

It is *timelessly* lucid, and *awareness* that is direct due to realization.

Detailed Analysis [c]

Timeless Awareness as Dharmakāya [i]

Dharmakāya abides as the ground of being, comparable to the sun, serving as the ground from which everything arises.

Timeless awareness is threefold, abiding in its natural resting place of profound lucidity.

Timeless Awareness as Sambhogakāya [ii]

Sambhogakāya, in exhibiting attributes, presents reflected forms.

From an analysis of five aspects of timeless awareness come twenty-five.

Timeless Awareness as Nirmāṇakāya [iii]

Nirmāṇakāya, all-pervasive, ensures all that is meaningful for those to be guided.

It entails four aspects of sublime intelligence, two for each of the two: knowing reality just as it is and knowing things in all their multiplicity.

Elucidation [3]

In summary, while one's own welfare is perfect within basic space, as one is embraced by the vase body, endowed with six distinctive attributes,

the welfare of others is found in the emerging of sambhogakāya, awareness's own natural manifestation.

Its dynamic energy ensures that enlightened activity takes place,
spontaneously and without interruption,
for those to be tamed, in both pure and impure realms.

*The foregoing constitutes the fourth part,
concerning a definitive conclusion about the specific fruition
according to the tradition of the Early Translation School
of the secret mantra approach.*

*This concludes the tenth book,
an analysis of the paths and levels to be traversed,
from The Encompassing of All Knowledge,
also entitled The Precious Treasury of Sublime Teachings:
The Compendium of the Methods of All Spiritual Approaches
and A Treatise That Thoroughly Presents the Three Higher Trainings.*

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONSUMMATE FRUITION STATE

Thus, the manifest states of realization associated with the five paths and the ten spiritual levels develop stage by stage. On the basis of this process being brought to completion, nirvāṇa as is it understood in any of the three spiritual approaches⁶⁶² (especially the nonlimited state of supreme enlightenment⁶⁶³) is made evident. Hence we have Book 10, a developmental analysis of the consummate fruition state. This book includes four parts that give detailed treatments reaching a definitive conclusion about the fruition in the cause-based dialectical approach; reaching a definitive conclusion about the more common spiritual attainments of the mantra approach; reaching a definitive conclusion about the consummate fruition in the Vajrayāna; and reaching a definitive conclusion about the specific fruition according to the tradition of the Early Translation School of the secret mantra approach.

PART 1. THE FRUITION IN THE DIALECTICAL APPROACH

I. Nirvāṇa according to the Three Spiritual Approaches

II. Buddhahood according to the Mahāyāna

A. Nature of Buddhahood

B. Meaning of the Term “Buddha”

C. Process of Accomplishment

1. Causes

2. Environment and Process

3. Fruition

a. Kāyas

i. Characteristics

aa. Dharmakāya

1# Meaning and Characteristics

2# Analysis

bb. Sambhogakāya

1# Meaning and Characteristics

2# Analysis

cc. Nirmāṇakāya

1# Meaning and Characteristics

2# Analysis

dd. The Presentation in the *Highest Continuum*

ii. Specific Features

aa. Equalness

bb. Constancy

cc. Manifestation

b. Timeless Awareness

i. Detailed Analysis

- ii. Meaning of the Terms and Essential Qualities
 - aa. Awareness as the Basic Space of Phenomena
 - bb. Mirrorlike Awareness
 - cc. Awareness as Equalness
 - dd. Discerning Awareness
 - ee. Awareness as Ensured Fulfillment
- iii. Causes
- iv. Transformation
- v. Association with the Kāyas
- c. The Qualities of Enlightenment
 - i. Overview
 - ii. Extensive Explanation
 - aa. Divestment
 - 1# The Intent of the *Highest Continuum*
 - a# The Ten Powers
 - b# The Four States of Fearlessness
 - c# The Eighteen Distinctive Qualities
 - 2# The Intent of the *Ornament of Manifest Realization*
 - bb. Maturation
 - 1# Overview
 - 2# Extensive Explanation
 - a# The Thirty-two Major Marks of Perfect Form
 - b# The Eighty Minor Marks of Perfect Form
 - c# The Sixty Qualities of Enlightened Speech
 - d. Enlightened Activity
 - i. Seven Ramifications of Enlightened Deeds
 - ii. Summary

The first part includes two topics: a general explanation of nirvāṇa as the fruition of the three spiritual approaches, and a detailed explanation of buddhahood as the fruition of the Mahāyāna.

Nirvāṇa according to the Three Spiritual Approaches [I]

Nirvāṇa is the fruition to be attained through the three spiritual approaches.

Nirvāṇa as the natural state is the suchness of phenomena.

Nirvāṇa as a state of cessation is either nominal (attained through devoted intent)

or authentic (attained through the paths of seeing and meditation), the latter being incomplete on the path of training and complete on that of no more training.

Nonlimited nirvāṇa does not fall into the extreme of either conditioned existence or personal salvation.

Given that nirvāṇa is the fruition to be attained through any of the three spiritual approaches, if I explain it in a general fashion it can be considered in three ways: nirvāṇa as the natural state; nirvāṇa as a state of cessation; and nonlimited nirvāṇa.

Concerning the first case, the *Source Verses on Sublime Intelligence* states: [4.170.b]

What is expressed in language is faulty
because the finite range of ordinary mind is faulty.
Unborn and unceasing,
the actual nature of phenomena is equivalent to nirvāṇa.⁶⁶⁴

In accord with this verse, the suchness of phenomena is a state of complete purity by its very nature.

Concerning the second case, nirvāṇa as a state of cessation is twofold. There is a nominal aspect, as the *Compendium of Abhidharma* states:

“In what way are there representational states?” one might ask. There are those states of cessation that come about when the mundane phase of the spiritual path weakens one’s karmic potentials. Therefore, the Blessed One spoke of these as nirvāṇa by way of association, as a foreshadowing.⁶⁶⁵

Accordingly, states of cessation that are attained through one’s devoted intent are the nominal aspect. Authentic states of cessation are those attained through the paths of seeing and meditation. The same source states:

“In what way are there authentic states?” one might ask. There are those states of cessation that come about when the sublime intelligence of a spiritually advanced person completely eradicates one’s karmic potentials.⁶⁶⁶

This, furthermore, has two phases: an incomplete one and a complete one. The former is described in the same source:

“What is the incomplete phase?” one might ask. There are those states of cessation that come about through the paths of training, that is, those that are considered the fruition of either the level of a stream-winner or a nonreturner.⁶⁶⁷

Thus, this phase includes all states of cessation that are associated with the paths of training. The complete phase is also described in the same source:

“What is the complete phase?” one might ask. There is that state of cessation that comes about through the path of no more training, that is, which is considered the fruition of an arhat.⁶⁶⁸

This phase includes all states of cessation associated with the path of no more training. Furthermore, depending on the developmental stages of the individual spiritual approaches, it can include both kinds of arhats: those who experience residual traces and those who do not.⁶⁶⁹

Concerning the third case, that of nonlimited nirvāṇa, due to the influence of the sublime intelligence and compassion of buddhas and bodhisattvas, this is nirvāṇa [4.171.a] that does not fall into either extreme of conditioned existence or personal salvation.

Buddhahood according to the Mahāyāna [II]

In the second place, there are three considerations: the nature of buddhahood; the meaning of the term “buddha”; and the process by which the enlightened activity associated with the kāyas is accomplished.

Nature of Buddhahood [A]

Endowed with three supreme properties, . . .

In its essence, the perfect state of complete buddhahood, the consummate fruition state, is imbued with three supreme properties. There is a supreme degree of elimination, in that one dimension of buddhahood is that it is completely purified of the two kinds of obscuration and the habitual patterning that underlies these. There is a supreme degree of realization, in that timeless awareness vividly perceives the entire range of what can be known, with nothing left out. There is a supreme degree of motivation, for on the strength of this realization benefit is ensured for countless beings in ways that are constant, pervasive, and spontaneous. the *Ornament of Manifest Realization* states:

In three ways (the most sublime motivation toward all beings, elimination, and realization),
this is known to be specifically endowed
with three naturally occurring properties.⁶⁷⁰

Meaning of the Term “Buddha” [B]

. . . buddhahood is comparable to a lotus.

“Why is the term ‘buddhahood’ used?” one might ask. The term “buddha” (awakened and expanded⁶⁷¹) refers to the fact that one has awakened from a state of ignorance (which is comparable to the state of sleep), while one’s mind has expanded to embrace the two aspects of what can be known.⁶⁷² As is said:

Because there has been an awakening from the sleep of ignorance
and because the mind has expanded to embrace what can be
known,
buddhahood is an awakened and expanded state, comparable to a
lotus.⁶⁷³

Process of Accomplishment [C]

There are three topics: a demonstration of the connection between certain causes and what is accomplished through them; an explanation of the specifics of how and in which environments this accomplishment takes place; and an extensive explanation of the fruition that is accomplished.

Causes [1]

Once the development of merit has been completed through bodhicitta,
the fully matured fruition is the accomplishment of the rūpakāyas,
while dharmakāya is the fruition of divestment through a
deepening of the experience of timeless awareness.

A twofold process of spiritual development consists of bodhicitta as the motivation and the six transcendent perfections as the enactment. [4.171.b] The two kāyas are attained once this process is complete. That is to say, for the sake of developing one's merit, one acts to ensure benefit for other beings; the rūpakāyas⁶⁷⁴ are attained as the result of the full maturation of this reinforcement. For the sake of deepening one's experience of timeless awareness, one cultivates meditative absorption; dharmakāya is attained as the result of thus divesting oneself of distortions. As the *Precious Garland* states:

The rūpakāyas of buddhas
are born of the development of merit.
Dharmakāya, in brief,
is born of deepening the majestic experience of timeless
awareness.⁶⁷⁵

Environment and Process [2]

That is to say, in the pinnacle pure realm of supreme Akaniṣṭha, dharmakāya makes itself evident on the basis of the sambhogakāya. Throughout the three-thousandfold universe, nirmāṇakāyas simultaneously demonstrate the way to enlightenment.

As the consummation of both kinds of benefit, the two kāyas are support and supported.

They do not exist as actual things and so are not created, yet are present

and so do manifest, bringing enjoyment of all one could desire.

Thus they constitute liberation.

In which environment, then, is buddhahood accomplished? In the pinnacle pure realm of supreme Akaniṣṭha,⁶⁷⁶ which completely transcends the three realms,⁶⁷⁷ dharmakāya makes itself evident on the basis of the sambhogakāya, whereupon the nirmāṇakāyas simultaneously demonstrate the way to enlightenment in the one billion world systems of a three-thousandfold universe. The *Journey to Śrī Laṅkā* states:

In the delightful realm of Akaniṣṭha Ghanavyūha,
beyond the immaculate abodes,⁶⁷⁸

the completely awakened Buddha awakened to buddhahood.

It was an emanation who awakened to buddhahood in this world.⁶⁷⁹

This categorization of three kāyas is a definitive enumeration that was seen to have value. The two rūpakāyas constitute the most excellent benefit for oneself and others, while dharmakāya constitutes their support. As Maitreya states:

The three kāyas exemplify benefit for oneself and others, [4.172.a]
as well as the support thereof.⁶⁸⁰

In other sources, it is explained that dharmakāya constitutes one's own benefit and is ultimate reality, while the rūpakāyas constitute benefit for others and are relative. Of these latter kāyas, the sambhogakāya manifests for those to be guided whose perceptions have been purified, while the nirmāṇakāya manifests for those whose perceptions have not. Thus, the first of the three kāyas is the support for the latter two, and these two are developmental, such that one is in turn the support for the other.⁶⁸¹

Furthermore, these kāyas do not exist in actuality and are not manifest in the sense that all the limitless obscuring influences of adventitious distortions have been eliminated. Yet they are forever unchanging and so do exist in a sense, constituting as they do the direct experience of the

limitless basic space of phenomena. In accord with how they are thus held to be, the kāyas bring the appreciation of an inexhaustible store of wealth. As is stated in the *Ornament of the Sūtras*:

Those that do not exist in actuality and yet do exist in some sense are said to be “not manifest yet manifest.”

This statement concerns different contexts.

Because there is enjoyment of all one could desire, they constitute liberation.⁶⁸²

Fruition [3]

There are four considerations: the kāyas as supports; timeless awareness as what is supported; the qualities of enlightenment that are due to the processes of divestment and maturation; and the enactment of enlightened activity.

Kāyas [a]

This involves two topics: the characteristics of the kāyas, and their specific features.

Characteristics [i]

This includes four discussions: dharmakāya, sambhogakāya, nirmāṇakāya, and (as a kind of supplement) a treatment of the presentation found in the *Highest Continuum*.

Dharmakāya [aa]

This discussion has two topics: the meaning of the term and the characteristics, and an analysis of the kāya under discussion.

Meaning and Characteristics [1#]

The basic space of phenomena, endowed with all inexhaustible qualities of enlightenment,

is the supportive kāya that is the actual nature of phenomena,
imbued with twofold purity.

It has eight characteristics: evenness, profundity, continuity,
uniqueness, authenticity, immaculacy, utter lucidity, and perfect
connectedness.

As for the derivation of the term “dharmakāya,” in *Ascertaining the Conditioned and Unconditioned* a passage is cited from the detailed commentary on the sūtra *Advice to a King*:

The dimension of the actual nature of phenomena is the stratum of authentic being, or dharmakāya. This is because it constitutes the “embodiment” of all phenomena, [4.172.b] in the sense that it does not stray from being the nature that is the suchness of all beings. And it is a “stratum,” or kāya, due to its being the basis for all positive qualities, whether mundane or transcendent.⁶⁸³

This accounts for the method of explaining that the term derives from *dharmatā-kāya*, with the *-tā* suffix eliminated.⁶⁸⁴

As for its characteristics, the basic space of phenomena, which is endowed with all inexhaustible qualities of enlightenment and is completely pure by nature, serves as the very essence of being itself, free of all adventitious distortions and endowed with twofold purity.⁶⁸⁵ This is svabhāvikakāya (the dimension of the very essence of being itself), or dharmakāya. As the *Ornament of Manifest Realization* states:

The svabhāvikakāya of the Sage
is the attainment of whatever properties are not subject to
degeneration,
is completely pure in every way,
and is by nature characterized by these properties.⁶⁸⁶

and the *Summary of the Mahāyāna Approach* states:

... Svabhāvikakāya is the dharmakāya, the dimension of true being, of all tathāgatas because it constitutes mastery of all phenomena.⁶⁸⁷

If we analyze these aspects, dharmakāya is endowed with eight characteristics: it is even, profound, ever-present, unitary, authentic, pristine, utterly lucid, and concomitant with the perfect richness of being. It is even because there is no distinction between all buddhas with respect to dharmakāya; it is profound because it is difficult to realize, being free of all elaboration; it is ever-present because it is unconditioned, and so unborn and unceasing, not involved in a linear time frame; it is unitary because it is indivisible, for basic space and timeless awareness are not things that are separate; it is authentic because it is incontrovertible, being beyond the limitations of speculative value judgments; it is pristine because it is free of the distortions of the three levels of obscuration;⁶⁸⁸ it is utterly lucid because it is nonconceptual awareness focusing on its own nonconceptuality; and it is concomitant with the perfect richness of being [4.173.a] because it serves as the basis for the sambhogakāya, which is the epitome of the vast qualities of enlightenment.

Analysis [2#]

Some assign the perfection of the process of elimination to
svabhāvikakāya
and the perfection of the process of realization to dharmakāya.

Although there can be no division in essence, according to some methods of explanation the following classification is given: Once both the afflictive and cognitive obscurations have been removed on the spiritual paths, immediately in the wake of the vajralike samādhi, they have all been vanquished; this is the perfection of the process of elimination, which constitutes svabhāvikakāya. Timeless awareness of all that can be known, that is, of things in all their multiplicity and of their real nature just as it is, brings direct perception and thorough comprehension of the characteristics of all phenomena exactly as they are; this is the perfection of the process of realization, which constitutes dharmakāya.

This is so because svabhāvikakāya is characterized as emptiness, which is to say, the nature of all phenomena, a nature that is free of all elaboration and completely pure; dharmakāya is characterized as completely pure timeless awareness that perceives that to be the case, so that these are, in a sense, perceived object and perceiving subject.

Sambhogakāya [bb]

The second discussion has two topics: the meaning of the term and the characteristics, and an analysis.

Meaning and Characteristics [1#]

Sambhogakāya, in the realm of Ghanavyūha,⁶⁸⁹ is adorned with major and minor marks of perfect form.

There is uninterrupted enjoyment of the Mahāyāna teachings in the company of spiritually advanced beings.

It has eight characteristics: retinue, realm, embodiment, marks, teaching, deeds, spontaneous presence, and absence of independent nature.

As for the derivation of the term “sambhogakāya,” the *Ornament of Manifest Realization* states:

Because there is thorough appreciation of the wealth of the Mahāyāna approach,
this is held to be the sambhogakāya of the sages.⁶⁹⁰

That is, it is sambhogakāya since it constitutes the basis for the perfect enjoyment of all states of realization that pertain to the Mahāyāna approach; or alternatively, since it expresses the Mahāyāna teachings because of that perfect enjoyment.

As for what characterizes sambhogakāya, in the environment of Ghanavyūha within the realm of supreme Akaniṣṭha, it constitutes a dimension of enlightened form that is adorned with major and minor marks of perfection, [4.173.b] and that together with bodhisattvas and other spiritually advanced beings thoroughly and solely enjoys the teachings of the Mahāyāna approach in an uninterrupted way. As the *Ornament of Manifest Realization* states:

As for this embodiment of the thirty-two major marks and eighty minor marks of perfection,
because there is thorough appreciation of the wealth of the Mahāyāna approach,
this is held to be the sambhogakāya of the sages.⁶⁹¹

If we further distinguish these characteristics, we can consider the sambhogakāya's retinue, realm, embodiments, attributes, teaching, deeds, spontaneous presence, and absence of independent nature. That is to say, the retinue that shares the sambhogakāya's enjoyment consists entirely of bodhisattvas on the tenth level of realization. The realm in which such enjoyment takes place is that of Akaniṣṭha Ghanavyūha. The embodiments that experience such enjoyment are Vairocana and the rest.⁶⁹² The attributes with which these embodiments are endowed are the thirty-two major and eighty minor marks of perfect form. The teachings that are enjoyed so completely are solely those of the Mahāyāna approach. The deeds that constitute the enlightened activity of the sambhogakāya are those such as the prophesying of how bodhisattvas, as children of the victorious ones, will attain enlightenment. The spontaneous presence of sambhogakāya refers to the fact that the deeds and other such characteristics happen spontaneously, without effort, as though from a wish-fulfilling gem. The absence of independent nature in sambhogakāya refers to the fact that while these embodiments and other manifestations appear in all their variety, like rainbows they do not constitute anything identifiable.⁶⁹³

If we discuss the sambhogakāya according to its fivefold certainty,⁶⁹⁴ it is said that the certainty of environment is that it is Akaniṣṭha; the certainty of essential qualities is that they are the major and minor marks of perfect form; the certainty of time frame is that it is one of constant presence, until saṃsāra has become naught; the certainty of retinue is that it consists of bodhisattvas on the tenth level of realization; and the certainty of the teaching is that it is solely that of the Mahāyāna approach.

Thus, sambhogakāya is endowed with eight characteristics.⁶⁹⁵

Analysis [2#]

It can be analyzed as either greater and lesser, or actual and nominal.

There are three opinions based on uniqueness, distinctness, and gradation.

If we analyze the sambhogakāya purely on the conventional level, we can distinguish the greater sambhogakāya that manifests in Ghanavyūha [4.174.a] and the lesser sambhogakāya that manifests in the Akaniṣṭha of the immaculate abodes.⁶⁹⁶ Alternatively, these are considered, respectively,

the actual sambhogakāya (that is, the abiding mode) and the nominal sambhogakāya (the manifest mode).⁶⁹⁷

In general, learned masters have three interpretations concerning the sambhogakāya. Some are of the opinion that all buddhas of the three times have but one sambhogakāya, and that a second is absolutely out of the question. Others (who feel that such an interpretation resembles the claims made by non-Buddhist holders of extremist views) hold that the sambhogakāyas of buddhas are entirely distinct from one another. Still others state that there is a gradation of sambhogakāya into greater and lesser.

For our purposes, the better methods of explanation are the former and the latter of these three interpretations. Moreover, the *Ornament of the Sūtras* states:

Buddhas, within incorruptible basic space,
accord with their former embodiments,⁶⁹⁸
yet their bodies are nonexistent, like space,
so buddhahood is neither a unity nor a plurality.⁶⁹⁹

As this passage explains, there is no single autonomous body, and so there is no need to apply this argument any further, to cases of corporeal bodies.⁷⁰⁰

The sambhogakāya, moreover, manifests to bodhisattvas on the tenth level of realization the way that a reflection appears in a mirror, apparent yet lacking any independent nature, and thus serves as the “bridge” to dharmakāya. Being the natural manifestations of the perceiver’s own consciousness, the appearances of sambhogakāyas (from the eyes to the entire form) do not constitute the usual physical structures (from the sense organ of the eye to the whole structure of the body). Given that this is the case, the sambhogakāya is beyond materiality, for what is material cannot possibly exhibit such ongoing and constant presence.

Furthermore, in his marvelous treatise the *Presence of Timeless Awareness*, the venerable Indrabhūti points out that if one posits some enlightened embodiment that is not one of timeless awareness, since such a body would be something subject to destruction, it would logically follow that timeless awareness was as well. As the treatise itself states:

If one holds that the timeless awareness of buddhas
has a form and is manifold,

then nirvāṇa must also be destructible.

Since a body is something subject to destruction,
then timeless awareness would have to be destructible as well.

[4.174.b]

Therefore, it makes no sense for the kāya of the timeless
awareness
of buddhahood to be subject to destruction.⁷⁰¹

Sambhogakāya is classified as having two aspects, constituting buddhahood's own natural manifestation and a manifestation within the perceptions of bodhisattvas.

Nirmāṇakāya [cc]

This discussion has two topics: the meaning of the term and the characteristics, and an analysis.

Meaning and Characteristics [1#]

For as long as saṃsāra endures and for the sake of beings,
nirmāṇakāya emanates
in various ways, ensuring benefit. It has eight characteristics:
support, cause, realms, time frame, nature, edification, maturation,
and freedom.

The meaning of the term “nirmāṇakāya” is that it implies the certainty of transformation into something else because it constitutes a body that by its nature is an emanation. As the master Daśabalaśrīmitra explains:

Nirmāṇakāya constitutes the enlightened embodiment that is
ensured by the very process of an emanation being emanat-
ed.⁷⁰²

As for what characterizes nirmāṇakāya, to further distinguish its characteristics, we can consider its support, cause, realms, time frame, nature, edifying function, maturing function, and liberating function. That is to say, the support of nirmāṇakāya is dharmakāya, which never wavers. As for the cause, nirmāṇakāya develops out of the supreme compassion that undertakes to benefit limitless beings. The realms of the nirmāṇakāya

consist of the entire range of all pure and impure realms in all their variety. The time frame is for as long as saṃsāra endures. The nature of the *nirmāṇakāya* is that it consists of the forms of three kinds of emanations: of skill; of birth; and of enlightenment. The edifying function of the *nirmāṇakāya* is that it ensures that beings in ordinary worlds yearn for, and strive toward, one of three kinds of enlightenment⁷⁰³ in whatever way is appropriate to any given being. The maturing function is that it ensures that those who have begun a spiritual path completely mature in their personal development. The freeing function is that it ensures that those who have been completely matured through its positive influence are freed from the bonds of conditioned existence.

Thus, *nirmāṇakāya* is endowed with eight characteristics.

Analysis [2#]

Nirmāṇakāyas of skill, birth, and sublimity reveal themselves through enlightened deeds.

If we analyze *nirmāṇakāya* manifestations, they are of three kinds: *nirmāṇakāyas* of skill; *nirmāṇakāyas* of birth; and sublime *nirmāṇakāyas*. [4.175.a] When the time is right, these *nirmāṇakāyas* point toward *nirvāṇa* and act so that those to be guided are brought into contact with the state of complete freedom. As the *Ornament of the Sūtras* states:

Through constantly demonstrating skill, birth,
and supreme enlightenment and *nirvāṇa*,⁷⁰⁴
the *nirmāṇakāya* of buddhahood
is the supreme means for complete liberation.⁷⁰⁵

With respect to the foregoing, there are *nirmāṇakāyas* of skill, such as the lute player emanating in order to guide the *gandharvas*;⁷⁰⁶ *nirmāṇakāyas* of birth, revealing themselves as hares and antelopes, for example;⁷⁰⁷ and sublime *nirmāṇakāyas* of supremely enlightened teachers such as Śākyamuni, who carry out such actions as the twelve deeds. The two former kinds are *nirmāṇakāyas* who have not yet fully matured, while the latter kind is the *nirmāṇakāya* that has fully matured. This distinction between “not yet fully matured” and “fully matured” is by way of making a precise distinction—of specifying what constitutes *complete*

maturation or not—rather than merely stating things in all-or-nothing terms of maturity.

The Presentation in the Highest Continuum [dd]

In the *Highest Continuum*, there is discussion of the essence as one of immaculacy, presence, bliss, and constancy, and of the three kāyas each being characterized as having five attributes.

In the Mahāyāna treatise the *Highest Continuum*, the essence of the kāyas is discussed in terms of being the perfection of immaculacy, presence, bliss and constancy, and the three kāyas are spoken of as each being characterized as having five attributes.

That is to say, although mind itself, completely pure by its very nature, previously functioned as the basis for habitual patterning, once one has awakened to buddhahood this no longer serves as a basis for such patterning; rather, there is twofold purity, which constitutes the perfection of a sacred immaculacy.

As long as there are conceptual thoughts, mind itself has for the time being the nature of something overlaid with habitual patterning but never itself falls under the derivative influence of those conceptual thoughts, and so it is a sacred presence. The perfection of this quality of sacred presence entails the subsiding of all conceptual elaboration concerning a “self” existing or not existing.⁷⁰⁸

In the most literal sense of the term, conceptual thought based on one’s perceptions has ceased from the eighth level of realization onward. [4.175.b] But one’s nonconceptual perceptions are experienced as the manifestation of the animate and inanimate universe; this constitutes the most subtle level of suffering, the epitome of what by nature is the coordinating faculty of ordinary mind. The perfection of sacred bliss lies in cessation of this subtle level along with its cause (that is, the nonrecognition of pure awareness that is the context for habitual patterning) because this entails the cessation of all suffering, together with its causes.

The consummation of meditation lies in the equalness of conditioned existence and ultimate peace (which is to say, the absence of any true variation between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa), and so there is the discovery of the nature of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa being that of equalness. This constitutes

the perfection of a sacred constancy since it is impossible for this situation to change for as long as space itself endures.⁷⁰⁹

Wherever these four “perfections” are complete, there is the kāya of buddhahood; which is to say, these are complete with respect to any of the kāyas from the point of view of the abiding mode of that kāya.

Dharmakāya is characterized as having five attributes: it is unmade; it is unassessable from any dualistic perspective; it is unerringly genuine; it is pure of any obscuration; and it is utterly lucid by its very nature.

Sambhogakāya is characterized as having five attributes: communicating through speech; being manifest as form; engaging uninterruptedly in enlightened deeds; acting through a process of spontaneous accomplishment; and being free of any manifold nature (even though the deeds of the three kāyas may appear to be manifold).

Nirmāṇakāya is characterized as having five attributes: presenting the path to peace; ensuring the maturation of those to be guided; ensuring the outcome of prophetic statements; presenting forms that carry out a variety of enlightened activities in an ongoing way, in whatever way is necessary to guide beings; and manifesting within the perception of someone else’s consciousness.

There are explanations in which it is stated that the two rūpakāyas constitute aspects of buddhahood, other explanations (such as that found in the *Holy Golden Light*)⁷¹⁰ that they do not, and even other statements to the effect that buddhahood does not exist at all. But learned masters who understand the key points of the teachings accept these all as provisional, definitive, and ultimately definitive statements, respectively.

Specific Features [ii]

The explanation of the distinctive features of the three kāyas includes three discussions: the distinctive feature of equalness; the distinctive feature of constancy; and the distinctive feature of manifestation.

Equalness [aa]

There is equalness of support, enlightened intent, and enlightened activity. [4.176.a]

Of the three distinctive features that pertain to the three kāyas, that of equalness is as follows:

- (1) equalness pertains to the dharmakāya of all buddhas, in that there is no arbitrary division within the basic space that is its support;
- (2) equalness pertains to the sambhogakāya of all buddhas, in that there is no arbitrary division with respect to their enlightened intent;
- (3) equalness pertains to the nirmāṇakāyas of all buddhas, in that their enlightened activity shares a common purpose.

The *Ornament of the Sūtras* states:

These entail equalness due to support,
enlightened intent, and enlightened activity.⁷¹¹

Constancy [bb]

There is constancy due to nature, an unimpaired quality, and continuity.

The distinctive feature of constancy is as follows:

- (1) as for dharmakāya, since it epitomizes freedom from origin and cessation in ultimate reality, there is constancy due to its very nature;
- (2) as for sambhogakāya, because there is an uninterrupted enjoyment of the richness of the dharma, there is constancy in that this is not subject to impairment;
- (3) as for nirmāṇakāyas, even though they disappear, they reveal themselves again and again, so that while they are alike in being discontinuous individually, there is constancy in the continuity of the function they perform because this does not fade with time.

The same source states:

These entail constancy due to nature, uninterruptedness, and continuity.⁷¹²

Manifestation [cc]

There is manifestation due to their being pure of cognitive, afflictive, and karmic obscurations.

The distinctive feature of manifestation is as follows: dharmakāya manifests due to the fact that the basic space of phenomena is pure of cognitive obscurations; sambhogakāya manifests due to the fact that it is pure of afflictive obscurations; and nirmāṇakāya manifests due to the fact that it is pure of karmic obscurations.

Furthermore, it should be understood that the two rūpakāyas occur due to the coming together of three factors: the blessings of dharmakāya; the perceptions of those to be guided; and the embodiments themselves, which are produced through previous aspirations.

Timeless Awareness [b]

The consideration of timeless awareness, as what is supported by the kāyas, has five topics: a detailed analysis; the meaning of the terms and the essential qualities; the causes that authenticate timeless awareness; the ways in which transformation takes place; and ways in which its knowing quality is associated with the kāyas. [4.176.b]

Detailed Analysis [i]

Timeless awareness, as what is supported, consists of five incorruptible ways of knowing.

If timeless awareness, which is connected to the foregoing kāyas in the sense that it is supported by them, is analyzed from the standpoint of its incorruptible ways of knowing, it is fivefold: Suchness, endowed with twofold purity, is termed “awareness as the basic space of phenomena” and constitutes the fundamental basis for all aspects of timeless awareness. “Mirrorlike timeless awareness” signifies that all phenomena without exception are known by the single state of timeless awareness. “Timeless awareness as equalness” signifies that all objects of knowledge are known within the equalness of their lacking any independent nature. “Discerning timeless awareness” signifies that, as many phenomena as there are, they are all known distinctly. “Timeless awareness as ensured fulfillment” signifies knowledge of what needs to be done to guide those who are to be guided.

Meaning of the Terms and Essential Qualities [ii]

The second point includes discussions of the significance of timeless awareness as the basic space of phenomena, mirrorlike timeless awareness, timeless awareness as equalness, discerning timeless awareness, and timeless awareness as ensured fulfillment.

Awareness as the Basic Space of Phenomena [aa]

**Awareness as the basic space of phenomena constitutes
nonduality, threefold freedom, and nonconceptuality.**

The meaning of the term is discussed in the *Two-Volume Glossary*:

Dharma-dhātu-visuddha is Sanskrit for the Tibetan *chos kyi dbyings rnam par dag pa* (the completely pure basic space of phenomena). This refers to what gives rise to, and is the source of, the qualities of spiritually advanced beings (qualities such as powers and states of fearlessness) and serves as the context for these qualities. Thus, the basic space of phenomena (the state of suchness) is clear of, or purified of, adventitious obscurations, both afflictive and cognitive, which are like clouds in their adventitiousness. Being like the clear and cloudless vault of the sky, this is termed “the completely pure basic space of phenomena.”⁷¹³

As for its essential qualities, this aspect of timeless awareness is such that basic space and pure awareness cannot be divided, as things distinct from one another, for there is nothing subject to origination in the first place, location in the interim, or cessation in the final analysis. It is free of the three levels of obscuration, for it does not constitute some object that falls within either of the two extremes of misinterpretation (that is, exaggeration or denial).⁷¹⁴ It does not constitute an object for conceptual thinking, for it is by its very nature free of the distortions that produce such flawed thinking. The completely pure basic space of phenomena is the incontrovertible nature—the suchness—of all phenomena. [4.177.a] It serves as the proximate cause that gives rise to all the qualities of

spiritually advanced beings, and is the very epitome of what all tathāgatas ultimately constitute. The *Highest Continuum* states:

Without beginning, middle, or end, undifferentiated,
without the two extremes, free of the three levels of obscuration,
immaculate, and nonconceptual—
the realization of what is the nature of the basic space of
phenomena
is perceived by the yogic practitioner resting in meditative
equipoise.⁷¹⁵

Mirrorlike Awareness [bb]

Without ordinary fixated perception, there is the manifestation of
all objects of knowledge as though in a mirror.

The meaning of the term is discussed in the *Two-Volume Glossary*:

Ādarśa-jñāna is Sanskrit for the Tibetan *me long lta bu'i ye shes* (mirrorlike timeless awareness). Since the completely pure basic space of phenomena involves no elaboration, it is free of all concepts based on a framework of perceived objects and a perceiving subject. The term refers to the fact that, with the transformation of consciousness as the basis of all ordinary experience,⁷¹⁶ the reflections of all phenomena manifest to this awareness, just as anything and everything is reflected in a polished mirror.⁷¹⁷

As for its essential qualities, due to the fact that this aspect of timeless awareness involves no fixated perception of what pertains to an “I,” there is at all times knowledge of the limitless sense objects, perceived as clearly as are reflections in a mirror. So there is no delusion concerning all that is knowable, nor is this awareness dependent on the experiencing of the images of these sense objects. As the *Ornament of the Sūtras* states:

Mirrorlike timeless awareness involves no sense of “mine.”
It is constant, knowing without in any way fragmenting.

Undeluded concerning all that is knowable,
it nevertheless is never biased toward them.⁷¹⁸

Awareness as Equality [cc]

Pure meditation is the equalness of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

The meaning of the term is discussed in the former source:

Samatā-jñāna is Sanskrit for the Tibetan *mnyam pa nyid kyi ye shes* (timeless awareness as equalness). Initially, on the first bodhisattva level, when completely pure meditation on the significance of suchness leads to actual realization,⁷¹⁹ there is no longer any division experienced between “self” and “other,” for the realization is one of their equalness. One then trains in higher and higher bodhisattva levels until, on the level of buddhahood, nirvāṇa that is not static or limited is attained. At that point, the afflictive aspect of consciousness has undergone a transition, [4.177.b] being transformed into an aspect of timeless awareness that is termed “timeless awareness as equalness.”⁷²⁰

As for its essential qualities, on the paths of training⁷²¹ one meditates on the equalness of self and other. One’s experience of this equalness becomes purer and more familiar, leading to the attainment of nonlimited nirvāṇa. Then there is knowledge of the equalness of all of conditioned existence and the peace of nirvāṇa. As the same source states:

Timeless awareness as equalness is held to derive
from pure meditation on all beings which,
once one has attained a nonlimited state of peace,
is held to become timeless awareness as equalness.⁷²²

Discerning Awareness [dd]

Discerning awareness of things in all their multiplicity is the
avenue to meditative absorption and the power of recall.

The meaning of the term is discussed in the former source:

Pratyavekṣ(aṇ)ā-jñāna is Sanskrit for the Tibetan *so sor rtog pa'i ye shes* (discerning timeless awareness). With the transformation of consciousness as the coordinating mental faculty,⁷²³ this awareness serves as the ground for all powers of recall and all states of meditative absorption, stability, and equipoise.⁷²⁴ Since this is timeless awareness that appreciates all that can be known without hindrance, it serves as the cause for a great downpour of spiritual teachings to rain down, for various kinds of doubt to be eradicated, just as gems such as sapphires shine with their luster.⁷²⁵ This is what is termed “discerning timeless awareness.”⁷²⁶

As for its essential qualities, this awareness cognizes and discerns individual objects of knowledge in all their multiplicity (that is to say, both their general and their specific defining characteristics) without confusion, appreciating them effortlessly; and it is endowed with limitless avenues of expression, as powers of recall and meditative absorption. As the same source states:

Discerning timeless awareness
is never hindered with respect to all objects of knowledge.
It is entirely like a treasure trove
of meditative absorption and powers of recall.⁷²⁷

Awareness as Ensured Fulfillment [ee]

Ensured fulfillment lies in the manifold display of countless skillful means.

The meaning of the term is discussed in the former source:

Kṛtyānuṣṭhāna(-jñāna) is Sanskrit for the Tibetan *bya ba grub pa'i ye shes* (timeless awareness as ensured fulfillment). With the transformation of the avenues of consciousness associated with the five sense faculties of vision and so forth, this awareness serves as the basis for benefit to be ensured for many be-

ings in all world systems, through an immeasurable variety of skillful means. [4.178.a] This is termed “timeless awareness as ensured fulfillment.”⁷²⁸

As for its essential qualities, this awareness constitutes knowing how to ensure benefit for beings through a manifold display of skill in means, in order that those to be guided may be completely brought to spiritual maturity throughout limitless world systems. As the same source states:

Timeless awareness as ensured fulfillment
manifests throughout all realms in various ways and,
by means of countless and inconceivable emanations,
ensures benefit for all beings.⁷²⁹

Causes [iii]

Concerning the third point, the causes that authenticate these aspects of timeless awareness:

Experience of these aspects comes about by one’s eliminating faults
through such activities as hearing teachings;
retaining the teachings; meditating on equalness; presenting
teachings; and ensuring others’ welfare.

Timeless awareness as the basic space of phenomena is authenticated by one’s thorough involvement in an enormous process of eliminating faults, due to such factors as the maturation of the habitual patterns that develop when one hears spiritual teachings. The *Summary of the Mahāyāna Approach* states:

Consider the habitual patterns⁷³⁰ associated with hearing teachings (whether of a small, middling, or great degree) to be the seeds of dharmakāya.⁷³¹

And as the *Ornament of the Sūtras* states:

Whenever the seeds of the afflictive and cognitive obscurations,
which have been constantly reinforced for a very long time,

are utterly destroyed by a thoroughgoing process of elimination on a very vast scale,
 there is perfect buddhahood itself, the attainment endowed with the transformation of positive qualities;⁷³²
 and that is gained through the path of timeless awareness, the infinite embrace of nonconceptual and utter purity.⁷³³

In similar ways, mirrorlike timeless awareness derives from one's hearing and retaining many spiritual teachings; timeless awareness as equalness, from one's meditating on the equalness of oneself and others; discerning timeless awareness, from one's clearly presenting authentic spiritual teachings, and timeless awareness as ensured fulfillment, from one's acting for the welfare of others. As the *Ornament of the Sūtras* states:

From retention, from an appreciation of equalness,
 from a clear presentation of authentic spiritual teachings, [4.178.b]
 and from the accomplishment of what is to be done,
 these four aspects of timeless awareness are derived.⁷³⁴

Transformation [iv]

The emptiness and lucidity of consciousness as the basis of all ordinary experience, the afflictive aspect of consciousness, consciousness as the coordinating mental faculty, and the five sense consciousnesses—their transformation constitutes the very essence of being itself.

With respect to consciousness as the basis of all ordinary experience, the transformation of one's experience of its empty aspect constitutes what is termed "timeless awareness as the basic space of phenomena," while the transformation of one's experience of its lucid aspect constitutes "mirrorlike timeless awareness." The transformation of one's experience of the afflictive aspect of consciousness constitutes "timeless awareness as equalness." The transformation of one's experience of consciousness as the coordinating mental faculty constitutes "discerning timeless awareness." The transformation of one's experience of the five sense consciousnesses constitutes "timeless awareness as ensured fulfillment." As the master Candragomin states:

Whatever constitutes consciousness as the basis of all ordinary experience

becomes mirrorlike timeless awareness itself.

Furthermore, as for awareness as the basic space of phenomena, some hold this to be the very essence of being itself.

The transformation of the afflictive aspect of consciousness is described as “timeless awareness as equalness.”

As for discerning timeless awareness,

this is consciousness as the coordinating mental faculty.

Because the avenues of consciousness associated with the five sensory faculties

completely appreciate all meaningful objects of experience, whatever constitutes these avenues of consciousness brings attainment

of timeless awareness as ensured fulfillment for the sake of all ordinary beings.⁷³⁵

Concerning the significance of the transformation that takes place, it is said that

the seed of conditioned existence is ordinary consciousness.⁷³⁶

Or, with respect to the characteristics of ordinary consciousness as a component of perception, it is said that

ordinary consciousness, which is corruptible,

is consciousness as a component of perception, and the support for rebirth.⁷³⁷

But these citations are not relevant here because the continuity of such ordinary kinds of consciousness is transmuted into the very essence itself of timeless awareness uncontaminated by afflictive states. The process is analogous to base metal being transformed into gold by the philosopher's stone.

Association with the Kāyas [v]

A pair of aspects is subsumed in each of the first two kāyas, with ensured fulfillment subsumed in nirmāṇakāya.

Because they transcend the ordinary intellect, they are free of such conceptual elaboration as being existent or nonexistent.

In their true nature they are nonmanifest; their way of manifesting is merely by way of interdependence;

these ways of knowing are beyond the ordinary mind's comprehension. [4.179.a]

Of the five aspects of timeless awareness, the two of awareness as the basic space of phenomena and mirrorlike awareness pertain to dharmakāya. The two of awareness as equalness and discerning awareness pertain to sambhogakāya. Awareness as ensured fulfillment pertains to nirmāṇakāya. The subsuming of these five aspects of timeless awareness within the three kāyas is discussed in the sūtra the *Level of Buddhahood*.⁷³⁸

Concerning the issues of whether or not timeless awareness exists on the level of buddhahood and of how knowing takes place through timeless awareness, there have been any number of Indian and Tibetan authors, the vast majority of whom have developed theories through their intellectual investigations. But if we consider things from the perspective of ultimate reality, because this timeless awareness of buddhahood transcends the scope of the ordinary intellect, it is free of all limitations imposed by conceptual elaboration of its existing or not existing, of its being or not being anything. As well, the sūtra the *Request of Suvikrānta-vikrami*⁷³⁹ states that timeless awareness is free of both existence and nonexistence.

Regarding the way in which this timeless awareness knows what is knowable, the actual nature of phenomena is known such that it is not something manifest,⁷⁴⁰ while the Middle Way source the *Two Levels of Truth* goes on to state:

Devoid⁷⁴¹ of things that are conceptually imputed, . . .

. . . all that is produced dependently is perceived by an omniscient one.⁷⁴²

As this passage indicates, relative reality is known in the way that it manifests, but merely as the manifestation of the interdependence of

causes and effects, not as something theorized by philosophers through intellectual investigation.⁷⁴³ There is also knowledge of the aspect of one's individual conceptual imputations manifesting in one's own mind; this is analogous to the way in which someone with the supernormal ability to perceive the minds of others can be aware of a dream occurring in the perception of someone else who is dreaming.

Therefore, because the way in which timeless awareness knows all that is knowable lies beyond the realm of intellectual speculation, it cannot be fathomed by the ordinary imagination of the majority of mundane minds. As is stated in the *Journey to Śrī Laṅkā*:

One's individual self-knowing timeless awareness
is not within the realm of those who engage in intellectual
speculation.⁷⁴⁴

And in the *Detailed Commentary on Valid Cognition*:

The investigation of forms, as well as mind,
as things that can be characterized as perceived objects
pertains to those with ordinary impure minds; [4.179.b]
but the realization of a yogic practitioner is inconceivable to the
ordinary imagination.⁷⁴⁵

When one adopts the perspective of relative reality, if the term “timeless awareness” is applied to ordinary mind and mental events, no such timeless awareness exists because all such confusion has come to an end. But if one considers that this awareness knows all that can be known, without exception, there is awareness present because the kāya of a transformed state of being has been attained.⁷⁴⁶

Qualities of Enlightenment [c]⁷⁴⁷

The consideration of the qualities of enlightenment, which are due to the processes of divestment and maturation, has two topics: an overview and a more extensive explanation.

Overview [i]

While the qualities of enlightenment are limitless, they can be summarized as twofold: due to divestment and maturation.

The qualities of perfect buddhahood are limitless and cannot truly be quantified, but if we were to summarize all of them, they would fall within two categories. There are some thirty-two qualities that derive from the fruition that simply consists of a divestment from distorting influences; these qualities are primordially indivisible from dharmakāya, the ultimate dimension of buddhahood that is the consummate expression for one's own welfare. And there are some thirty-two qualities that derive from a process of complete maturation, these qualities develop gradually and are present in the rūpakāyas, the relative dimension of buddhahood that is the consummate expression for the welfare of others. In the *Highest Continuum* we find such statements as the following:

One's own welfare and that of others constitute, respectively, the kāya that is the ultimate dimension of enlightened being and, dependent on that, the kāyas that are the relative dimension. Due to the processes of divestment and complete maturation,⁷⁴⁸ the qualities of enlightenment can be analyzed to be some sixty-four in number.⁷⁴⁹

Extensive Explanation [ii]

This point involves two topics: the qualities that are due to divestment, and those that are due to complete maturation.

Divestment [aa]

This discussion has two topics: thirty-two qualities (according to the intent of the *Highest Continuum*), and twenty-one categories of incorruptibility (according to the intent of the *Ornament of Manifest Realization*).

The Intent of the Highest Continuum [1#]

In the first place, there is both a brief summary to provide an introduction, and a more extensive explanation of the significance of these qualities. For the summary:

On the ultimate level, there are thirty-two qualities due to divestment.

The explanation concerns three groupings: the ten powers; the four states of fearlessness; and the eighteen distinctive qualities.

The Ten Powers [a#][4.180.a]

Knowledge of appropriateness, consequences, capacity,
temperament, aspiration, destiny,
afflictive states versus enlightenment, recollection, birth and
death, and the end of all that is corruptible—
the ten powers of knowledge are like a vajra, overcoming
obscurations.

The single power that is the timeless awareness of a tathāgata can be further analyzed into ten powers on the basis of what constitutes the focus of the knowing involved. These ten powers that are ensured with buddhahood are as follows:

(1) the power of knowing what is appropriate (for example, the attainment of desirable results due to the natural consequences of positive actions undertaken with a firm resolve based on one's previous arousal of bodhicitta and the bodhisattva vow) or inappropriate (for example, the attainment of an undesirable result due to the foregoing circumstances);⁷⁵⁰

(2) the power of knowing the inevitable consequences of karma (that is, due to the demonstration of the results of karma, knowing that the actions that any individual being commits create karma, the effects of which are experienced within the stream of that same individual's consciousness);⁷⁵¹

(3) the power of knowing the greater or lesser capacity of beings (that

is, through teaching the dharma to beings in accord with their capacities, knowing their individual capacities for faith, and so forth);

(4) the power of knowing the temperaments of beings in all their variety (that is, by relating to their individual temperaments, knowing the distinct types of individuals who follow the three spiritual approaches⁷⁵²);⁷⁵³

(5) the power of knowing the aspirations of beings in all their variety (that is, by relating to their individual aspirations, knowing the various aspirations of beings, for example, whether they aspire to some state that is still corruptible, or to one that is incorruptible);⁷⁵⁴

(6) the power of knowing paths that lead to all destinies (that is, through being familiar with all spiritual approaches, knowing all the paths that lead anywhere, to saṃsāra or nirvāṇa);⁷⁵⁵

(7) the power of knowing all modes of being, whether those of deeply ingrained afflictive states or those of completely refined states of enlightenment (that is, due to immersion in meditative absorption, knowing all states of meditative stability, modes of liberation, and so forth);

(8) the power of recalling former lifetimes (since what is positive never ceases to have effect);⁷⁵⁶

(9) the power of knowing death, transition, and rebirth (due to the clairvoyance that comes from such factors as one's altruistic motivation toward other beings);⁷⁵⁷ and

(10) the power of knowing the state of peace in which all that is corruptible has come to an end (due to the teaching of the dharma for the purpose of putting an end to all that is corruptible).⁷⁵⁸

In the foregoing ways, these ten powers are comparable to a vajra because they overcome obscurations such as the nonrecognition of pure awareness, such that awareness can never again be fragmented by these obscurations.

The Four States of Fearlessness [b#]

Concerning enlightenment, the end of what is corruptible,
 declaration, and the path of the will to be free,
 there is fearlessness, like that of a lion, in teaching to bring the two
 kinds of benefit.

That is to say:

(1) There is fearlessness in the experience of all phenomena from the perspective of manifest enlightenment. [4.180.b] Buddhas have such knowledge, and even thorough comprehension, of all phenomena that there is no way for anyone in the world, no matter how powerful, to dispute this by saying, "Such is not the case." This is called "[fearlessness in] consummate realization."

(2) There is fearlessness in the end of what is corruptible. All that is corruptible, such as desire and attachment, has come to an end. Therefore, for buddhas (who can attest to that) there is no way for this fact to be disputed. This is called "[fearlessness in] consummate renunciation."

(3) There is fearlessness in declaring which factors obstruct the spiritual path. Since buddhas see directly that such factors as sensory pleasures and attachment to personal salvation constitute spiritual obstacles, there is no way that the declaration that this is so can be disputed.

(4) There is fearlessness in proclaiming the path of the will to be free. Because buddhas see directly that complete freedom is gained through the factors that contribute to enlightenment, and through no other factors, there is no way that anyone can dispute the declaration that this is so.

The first two states constitute the consummate expression of one's own welfare, while the latter two constitute the consummate expression of others' welfare. Due to these four states of fearlessness, a buddha teaches the dharma to a retinue without fear or anxiety, and so is compared to a lion.

The Eighteen Distinctive Qualities [c#]

Six each falling under conduct and realization, three each under deeds and knowledge:

the eighteen qualities that distinguish buddhas from others are comparable to space.

There are six qualities only buddhas possess that fall under the heading of conduct, six that fall under the heading of realization, three that fall under the heading of enlightened deeds, and three that fall under the heading of sublime intelligence. These are the eighteen distinctive qualities that are not shared by śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and others. Though

directly perceptible to others, these qualities have no tangible forms but belong to the realm of what is unconditioned, analogous to space, which is distinct from the four elements.⁷⁵⁹

The first kind of qualities are those falling under the heading of conduct. Arhats can behave with confusion, such as walking in the path of a mad bull elephant; they can speak without real purpose, using jokes and sarcasm; [4.181.a] they can forget something they have memorized; they do not rest in meditative equipoise during postmeditation; they entertain ideas of conditioned existence and the state of peace having truly distinct natures; and they rest in a state of apathy, without examining those to be guided. On the other hand, (1) in the physical conduct of tathāgatas, there is no confusion, such as would cause them to tread unwittingly on a snake. (2) In the words they speak, there is no lack of real purpose, such as the uttering of meaningless words. (3) In the way their minds work, there is no loss of memory, for they can recall their deeds and words over long periods of time without any distortions due to afflictive states. (4) There is no point at which they are not resting in meditative equipoise, for their enlightened awareness is constantly engaged at all times, in meditative equipoise and postmeditation. (5) There is no idea of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa being distinct from one another, for they have gained consummate realization of the equalness of conditioned existence and the state of peace. (6) They do not rest in a state of apathy, without examining those to be guided, although the possibility exists that they might forego intervening once they had examined them, if there were no benefit to doing so. These are the six qualities that fall under the heading of conduct.

The second kind of qualities are the six falling under the heading of realization. Since they still possess a residual degree of cognitive obscurations, arhats can experience a diminishment of their will and the rest of the six factors. On the other hand, tathāgatas have eliminated absolutely every cognitive obscuration. For them, therefore, there is none of the complete diminishment that a lack of attainment would entail, not in (7) their diligence,⁷⁶⁰ or in (8) their mindfulness,⁷⁶¹ or in (9) their faculty of sublime intelligence,⁷⁶² or in (10) their will concerning these three,⁷⁶³ or in (11) the complete freedom that is their fruition,⁷⁶⁴ or in (12) the enlightened perspective of timeless awareness associated with that fruition state. These are the six qualities that fall under the heading of realization. In enumerating these qualities, one may follow the intent of different sūtras.

Thus, the Prajñāpāramitā literature refers to two of them as “meditative absorption” and “complete freedom.” Other treatments refer to “meditative absorption” and “the enlightened perspective of complete freedom.” And the *Highest Continuum*, drawing on the sūtra the *Request of the Girl Ratnā*,⁷⁶⁵ refers to “complete freedom” and “the enlightened perspective of complete freedom.”⁷⁶⁶ [4.181.b] In cases where meditative absorption is not included, the intention is that this quality is already included in the foregoing discussion of there never being a point at which buddhas are not resting in meditative equipoise.⁷⁶⁷

The third kind of qualities are the three falling under the heading of enlightened deeds.⁷⁶⁸ These are referred to in the *Highest Continuum*:

Their actions are preceded by timeless awareness. . . .⁷⁶⁹

That is to say, the physical, verbal, and mental actions of arhats are sometimes morally positive and sometimes morally neutral. On the other hand, all the (13) physical, (14) verbal, and (15) mental deeds and activities of tathāgatas are motivated entirely by timeless awareness, and so are “preceded by timeless awareness” as the causal motivation at the outset. These deeds take place in conjunction with timeless awareness and “follow in the wake of timeless awareness” as the motivation for the duration, and so they are entirely positive morally. Such are the three distinctive qualities of enlightened activity, unshared by others.

The fourth kind of qualities are the three falling under the heading of sublime intelligence.⁷⁷⁰ The pristine awareness of arhats cannot be experienced through strength of mind alone but entails some degree of attachment and does not constitute realization of everything; it is, therefore, somewhat impeded in its functioning. On the other hand, tathāgatas realize all that there is to be known through strength of mind alone, and so they have attained the unobscured enlightened perspective of timeless awareness that involves no wishful thinking, unattached to and unimpeded concerning things that (16) occurred in the past, (17) will occur in the future, and (18) occur in the present. Such is their distinctive timeless awareness, unshared by others.

From among the four schools of Buddhist philosophy,⁷⁷¹ the inclusion of such qualities as the lack of real purpose in these eighteen distinctive qualities is the explanation according to the Sautrāntika school. The *Treasury of Abhidharma* states:

The distinctive qualities of buddhahood
are eighteen: the powers and the rest.⁷⁷²

Here it is referring to the explanation according to the commentaries in the Vaibhāṣika system, which enumerates these eighteen as being the ten powers, the four states of fearlessness, the three distinctive applications of mindfulness,⁷⁷³ and great compassion.⁷⁷⁴

The Intent of the Ornament of Manifest Realization [2#]

In the second place, there is the explanation of the “twenty-one categories of incorruptibility.”

In a more detailed way, there are twenty-one categories of
incorruptibility:

the factors that contribute to enlightenment, the immeasurable
attitudes, the modes of liberation, [4.182.a]

the stages of meditative equipoise, the states of total immersion,
the sense fields that eclipse ordinary perceptions, the absence of
afflictive states,

wisdom born of aspiration, the levels of deeper discernment, the
states of authentic discernment,

the four aspects of complete purity, the kinds of control, the
powers, the four states of fearlessness,

the factors that need not be closely guarded, the applications
of mindfulness, the absence of oblivion, the overcoming of
habitual patterns,

supreme innate compassion, the distinctive qualities, and
omniscience.

In a more extensive treatment of the qualities that pertain to dharmakāya, the ultimate dimension of enlightenment, the *Ornament of Manifest Realization*, in its section dealing with the fruition of dharmakāya,⁷⁷⁵ speaks of twenty-one categories of incorruptibility.

(1) The first category is that of the factors that contribute to enlightenment. These factors, which fall under the heading of the enlightened form of the tathāgatas, begin with the applications of mindfulness and continue up to the eightfold path of noble ones. When one is an ordinary

being, these factors are not evident, for the partial power deriving from the process of divestment is anything but fully developed. But this is not so for buddhas, for whom it is fully developed and there is freedom from distortions. Then these factors are subsumed within the basic space of incorruptible timeless awareness; in fact, this principle applies to all of the categories of the incorruptibility of timeless awareness.

(2) The second category is that of love and the other immeasurable attitudes, which for beings other than buddhas bring about rebirth among the Brahmā gods.⁷⁷⁶

(3) The third category is that of the eight modes of complete liberation.⁷⁷⁷ Two of these are called “the mode of liberation in what has form regarding what has form” (that is, the way one regards external forms while still thinking of one’s inner consciousness as something having form⁷⁷⁸) and “the mode of liberation in what has no form regarding what has form” (that is, the way one regards external forms while no longer thinking of one’s inner consciousness as having form⁷⁷⁹). There is one mode called “the mode of liberation in beauty,” which consists of one’s having direct experiences, through one’s physical senses, of what is attractive by nature and remaining completely focused on those experiences.⁷⁸⁰ There are four modes called “perceptual processes” focusing on space, consciousness, nothingness, and neither perception nor nonperception.⁷⁸¹ And there is one mode called the “cessation” of perception and sensation.⁷⁸² [4.182.b]

(4) The fourth category is that of the nine successive stages of meditative equipoise. These are the states of equipoise associated with the four levels of meditative stability associated with the realm of form; the four states of equipoise associated with the formless realm;⁷⁸³ and the “equipoise of cessation.”⁷⁸⁴

(5) The fifth category is that of the ten states of total immersion: in the perception of earth, water, fire, air, blue, yellow, red, white, infinite space, and infinite consciousness.⁷⁸⁵

(6) The sixth category is that of the eight sense fields that eclipse ordinary perceptions.⁷⁸⁶ The first four of these include two that are said to eclipse one’s perceptions of external forms while one is still thinking of one’s inner consciousness as something having form (that is, one looks at external forms and perceives them individually as either small or enormous); and two that are said to eclipse one’s perceptions of external forms while one is no longer thinking of one’s inner consciousness as something having form (that is, one looks at external forms and perceives them

individually as either small or enormous). The latter four are said to bring states of perception that eclipse all others; that is to say, while no longer thinking of one's inner consciousness as something having form, one perceives everything as a blue field, a yellow field, a red field, or a white field. In brief, one attains the power to arrest the perceptions that beings in similar circumstances share of the four elements and four basic colors and to cause these perceptions to disappear. These are states of meditative absorption that cause one to see the whole world as though made entirely, or solely, of something like gold, or to be totally immersed in such a perception.

(7) The seventh category is that of the absence of afflictive states, that is, whatever constitutes the "meditative absorption that uproots" the harmful flow of these afflictive states in the minds of others.

(8) The eighth category is that of sublime intelligence born of aspiration.⁷⁸⁷ In actuality a buddha's mind is free of all that can be characterized by ordinary conceptual elaboration and never wavers from having such a nature. But with respect to those who are to be guided by a buddha and view things in terms of their ordinary characteristics, [4.183.a] it also entails the fulfillment of aspirations to overcome their desires and attachments and resolve their doubts. Thus, the timeless awareness of tathāgatas engages in activity for the sake of beings in all circumstances, for as long as saṃsāra lasts. It also entails knowledge, once the state of complete freedom has been gained, that engages in activity for the sake of beings in all circumstances.⁷⁸⁸

(9) The ninth category is that of the six levels of deeper discernment. These are:

(a) "divine sight," that is, the clairvoyant ability to see all the physical bodies that any and all beings will take upon their rebirth after death in their present lifetime, no matter how near or far they are from one;

(b) "divine hearing," that is, the clairaudient ability to hear and understand all manner of sounds and languages and codes;

(c) the knowledge of the different states of others' minds, that is, the telepathic ability to know all the thoughts and underlying habitual patterns, both major and minor, in the minds of beings;

(d) the ability to perform physical miracles, such as knowing how to make one's body shine resplendently, fly, multiply or decrease in number, become more or less attractive, move on water, or pass through solid earth;

(e) the recollection of former lifetimes, that is, recall of what rebirths beings experienced prior to the present one and what actions they committed in those former lifetimes; and

(f) the “knowledge of the exhaustion of all negative factors,” that is, the knowledge that such exhaustion has taken or is taking place and that the experience of unborn timeless awareness has been attained, through one’s being aware of the steps by which the factors to be eliminated on the paths of seeing and meditation have been removed or have yet to be.

(10) The tenth category is that of the four states of authentic discernment.⁷⁸⁹ These are:

(a) the authentic discernment of spiritual teachings, that is, teaching the eighty-four thousand spiritual approaches of the dharma as myriad antidotal methods, in accord with the different inclinations of ordinary beings;

(b) the authentic discernment of meaning, that is, knowledge of both concepts and their implications, with respect to what characterizes phenomena in general (that they are impermanent, contribute to suffering, are empty, and lack any independent nature), as well as what characterizes them on the more ultimate level (that their nature is unborn and unceasing);

(c) the authentic discernment of language, that is, knowledge of the languages and terms used by ordinary beings and a lack of any ignorance concerning the underlying meanings of these words; and

(d) the authentic discernment of poise, that is, the unhindered ability to teach the dharma and resolve doubts. [4.183.b]

(11) The eleventh category is that of the four aspects of complete purity: body, attention, mind, and timeless awareness.⁷⁹⁰

(12) The twelfth category is that of the ten kinds of control. As explained before,⁷⁹¹ these are:

Control over longevity, mind, material objects, activity,
rebirth, devoted intent, aspiration,
miraculous powers, timeless awareness, and phenomena.⁷⁹²

Of these ten kinds of control, the first three are the results of generosity; those over activity and rebirth, of discipline; that over devoted intent, of patience; that over aspiration, of diligence; that over miraculous powers, of meditative stability; and the last two controls, of sublime

intelligence. On the paths of training, one experiences approximations of these controls; the actual controls pertain solely to the level of buddhahood.

(13) The thirteenth category is that of the ten powers.

(14) The fourteenth category is that of the four states of fearlessness.

(15) The fifteenth category is that of the three factors that need not be closely guarded,⁷⁹³ which concern the fact that the physical, verbal, and mental conduct of tathāgatas is completely pure of any confusion. Thus, the nature of buddhahood is such that it does not involve any mistaken conduct, nothing that one would be anxious about others knowing, or that would involve any such attitude as, “I am ashamed of or embarrassed by this, and so will conceal it so no one will know.”

(16) The sixteenth category is that of the three applications of mindfulness. When a tathāgata teaches the dharma, there are those who wish to listen with devotion; those who do not wish to listen; and those who are ambivalent, at times devoted and at other times not. In such cases, a tathāgata is entirely devoid of any responses, respectively, of attachment, anger, or some combination of emotional reactions, and so is said to “rest in the mindfulness of impartiality.”

(17) The seventeenth category is that of the actual nature that does not entail forgetfulness, which is to say, does not constitute a state of oblivion. This ensures that enlightened deeds for the sake of ordinary beings take place in a timely manner, in whatever way is necessary to guide beings under any circumstances. Thus, it is a characteristic of these deeds that it is impossible for them to be delayed beyond the appropriate situation.

(18) The eighteenth category is that of the authentic overcoming of habitual patterns. [4.184.a] This is due to the elimination of the potentials for what are, in essence, the afflictive and cognitive obscurations.

(19) The nineteenth category is that of supreme innate compassion for beings; this refers to what is called an “altruistic attitude” toward all limitless beings.

(20) The twentieth category is that of the eighteen distinctive qualities, that is, qualities that are not shared with spiritually advanced beings of lesser development.⁷⁹⁴

(21) The twenty-first category is that of omniscience, which is to say, knowledge of anything and everything, the omniscience of the fruition state.⁷⁹⁵

The foregoing categories are explained as pertaining to the nature of

dharmakāya, which is complete freedom from all states that involve factors to be eliminated.

Maturation [bb]

The explanation of the qualities of enlightenment that are due to a process of maturation has two topics: a brief overview and a more extensive explanation.

Overview [1#]

The two kinds of rūpakāya are like the moon in the sky and its reflection in water.

Their qualities, which are due to complete spiritual maturation, are manifest yet cannot be found to exist as such.

Of the two kinds of rūpakāya, sambhogakāya is comparable to the moon shining in the sky, while nirmāṇakāya is comparable to the moon's reflection in water. Although these manifestations appear in all their variety in response to those to be guided, they do not in essence constitute anything that can be found to exist as such. As for the qualities that are due to a process of maturation, there are thirty-two major marks of perfect form and eighty minor marks, as well as the qualities of enlightened speech.

Extensive Explanation [2#]

There are thirty-two marks, such as soles that are exceedingly level and marked with wheels,
and eighty, such as nails that are copper colored, glossy, and raised.

A supreme being is adorned with these major and minor marks of perfect form.

Enlightened speech is endowed with sixty melodious qualities.

The Thirty-two Major Marks of Perfect Form [a#]

The thirty-two major marks are as follows:⁷⁹⁶

- (1) due to tathāgatas' having formerly held firmly to spiritual commitments, the soles of their feet are exceedingly level;
- (2) due to their having practiced generosity, the soles of their feet and palms of their hands are marked with designs of wheels;
- (3) due to their not having treated others with disdain, their heels are wide and the ankle-joints are not visible;
- (4) due to their having protected other beings from fear, their fingers are long;
- (5) due to their not having created disharmony within the retinues of others through calumny, their fingers and toes are webbed; [4.184.b]
- (6) due to their having given beings various kinds of raiment, the skin of their hands and feet is smooth and youthful in appearance;
- (7) due to their having given beings food and drink on a vast scale, they have seven places on their forms that are rounded and prominent: the soles, palms, shoulders, and the back of the neck;
- (8) due to their having upheld the dharma taught by buddhas, their calves are like those of a stag (which is to say, a *śarabha*⁷⁹⁷ or deer), full-fleshed and tapering;
- (9) due to their preserving the secrecy of teachings and abandoning sexual conduct, their genitals are concealed within a sheath, like those of an elephant;
- (10) due to their having engaged in positive acts on a vast scale, their upper torsos are broad and majestic, like that of a lion;
- (11) due to their having engaged in positive acts authentically, the space between their clavicles is not hollow, but full-fleshed;
- (12) due to their having imparted fearlessness to others, their shoulders are well-rounded;
- (13) due to their having acted enthusiastically on behalf of others, the palms of their hands are soft and rounded, without any unevenness;
- (14) due to their having been diligent in ensuring the welfare of others, their arms are long, reaching to their knees without them having to bend over;
- (15) due to their having been avidly involved in the ten kinds of positive action, their forms are utterly free of flaw and surrounded by aureoles of light as wide as their arms can reach;

- (16) due to their having given medicine and other care to the sick, their throats are free of blemish or discoloration and are lined like a conch shell;⁷⁹⁸
- (17) due to their having brought the positive acts they initiated to eventual completion, their cheeks are like those of a lion, the king of beasts;
- (18) due to their having considered all beings equally, their forty teeth (twenty each in the upper and lower jaws) are straight and evenly set, completely free of any flaw;
- (19) due to their having guarded their physical, verbal, and mental conduct, their canine teeth are exceedingly white;
- (20) due to their having spoken the truth, their tongues are long, allowing speech that is limitless and imbued with inconceivable meaning;
- (21) due to their having given beings many delicious things, their tongues taste only the most delicious flavors;
- (22) due to their having spoken gentle and pleasing words, their naturally occurring voices are melodious, [4.185.a] like the song of the wood pigeon or the melody of Brahmā's voice;
- (23) due to their having been loving and having nurtured everyone, their noble eyes are the hue of the blue lotus;
- (24) due to their thoughts having been without deceit, their eyelashes are glossy and even, like those of an ox;
- (25) due to their having praised what is praiseworthy, their faces are lovely and free of blemish, and between their eyebrows are *urṇas*, formed of single white hairs coiled in a circle thirty-two times;
- (26) due to the devotion they showed their gurus, their heads have protuberances on top⁷⁹⁹ and their posture is straight and unwavering;
- (27) due to their having been adept at seeking the dharma, their skin is clear and soft, and has a golden hue;
- (28) due to their having abandoned dissipating busyness, their body hairs are fine and soft, each one growing from a single follicle;
- (29) due to their having acted in harmony with the spiritual instructions they received, their body hairs grow upward and coil in a clockwise direction;
- (30) due to their having been loving toward all and having avoided the

use of weapons, the hair on their heads is immaculate and a deep blue, like the color of a sapphire;

- (31) due to their having involved everyone (themselves and others) in the practice of meditative stability, their bodies are large but well proportioned, like the proportions of a fully grown banyan tree;⁸⁰⁰ and
- (32) due to the buddhas' being wholly noble ones, unrivalled, and supreme seers, their bodies are strong; endowed with the power of Nārāyaṇa.⁸⁰¹

The Eighty Minor Marks of Perfect Form [b#]

The eighty minor major marks are as described in the *Ornament of Manifest Realization*:

The Sage has (1) nails that are copper colored, (2) glossy, and (3) raised;
 fingers⁸⁰² that are (4) round, (5) wide, and (6) tapered;
 (7) veins that are inconspicuous and (8) without knots;
 (9) inconspicuous ankles; (10) equal-sized feet;
 the gait of (11) a lion, (12) an elephant, (13) a bird, (14) and a bull;
 (15) a gait that tends to the right;
 (16) an elegant gait; (17) an erect posture;
 a physique that is (18) well rounded, (19) smooth as though polished, (20) and evenly proportioned;
 a body that is (21) clean, (22) soft, and (23) pure;
 (24) marks of perfection in their entirety;
 (25) a large and noble body structure; [4.185.b]
 (26) an even gait; (27) eyes that are both perfectly formed;
 a body that is (28) exceedingly youthful, (29) unimpaired, (30) full fleshed, and (31) very firm and solid;
 (32) exceedingly well-defined limbs;
 (33) clear and unobscured vision;
 a belly that is (34) rounded, (35) smooth, (36) without folds, and (37) firm;
 a navel that is (38) deep and (39) spirals to the right;
 (40) a form that is beautiful when viewed from any side;
 (41) impeccable behavior;

a body that is (42) free of moles and blemishes;
 (43) hands as soft as cotton;
 palm lines that are (44) deep, (45) long, and (46) clearly outlined;
 (47) a face that is not too long;
 (48) lips as red as a bimba fruit;
 a tongue that is (49) supple, (50) slender, and (51) red;
 (52) a voice like thunder;
 (53) a pleasant and gentle voice;
 canine teeth that are (54) cylindrical, (55) sharp, (56) white, (57)
 equal in size, and (58) tapered;
 a (59) high-bridged nose that is (60) extremely pure and clean;
 (61) eyes that are long from corner to corner,
 with (62) thick lashes and (63) pupils with the luster of lotus
 petals;
 eyebrows that are (64) long, (65) soft, (66) glossy, and (67) made
 up of hairs of equal length;
 (68) long and well-muscled arms;
 (69) ears of equal size (70) with completely unimpaired hearing;
 a brow that is (71) well formed and (72) broad;
 (73) a large head;
 hair that is (74) as bluish-black as that of a bumblebee,
 (75) thick, (76) soft, (77) not tangled, (78) not unruly,
 and (79) fragrant with a scent that captivates people's hearts;
 and (80) the adorning marks of the "endless knot," auspicious
 emblems, and the swastika.⁸⁰³
 These are held to be the noble minor marks of a buddha.⁸⁰⁴

Of the foregoing points, "nails that are . . . raised" means that they are not sunken; "inconspicuous ankles" means that the ankles joints do not protrude outward; "equal-sized feet" means that they are of the same length, width, and thickness. Buddhas walk with "the gait of a lion" because their splendor overwhelms humans and other beings who live on the surface of the earth; with "the gait of an elephant" because their splendor overwhelms nāgas [4.186.a] and other beings who live beneath the earth; with "the gait of a bird" (that is, a swan or an eagle) because their splendor overwhelms beings who fly through the air or otherwise live above the earth; and with "the gait of a bull" because they lead their retinues. The "marks of perfection" are clearly and fully evident "in their entirety." Their bellies

are “firm” because they are broad yet lovely. A buddha’s “navel . . . is deep” (that is, deeply inset), and the wrinkles therein “spiral to the right” (that is, in a clockwise direction). A buddha’s face is not marred by the flaw of being too large, and a buddha’s voice is not marred by the flaw of being too faint. A buddha’s two “eyebrows . . . are long” because they meet, and a buddha’s “brow . . . is well formed” because it is wide without being protruding, and the hairline is symmetrical. A buddha’s palms and soles are marked with designs of the endless knot, of wheels with seven concentric rims adorned with a series of auspicious emblems, and of squarish patterns in the shape of revolving swastikas. The remaining points are easy to understand.

One might ask, “What kind of things do these marks constitute in their very essence?” There are different opinions concerning this question. According to those who follow the śrāvakas schools,⁸⁰⁵ these marks are part of the realm of physical forms, which is to say, they are phenomena constructed of minute particles, and in their very essence are inanimate matter that exist as meaningful objects external to the perceiver. According to the idealist philosophers,⁸⁰⁶ in terms of their essence these marks constitute meditative absorption in conjunction with the cooperative influence of sublime intelligence, while in terms of their function they are said to create impressions in the perceptions of those who are to be guided by buddhas; thus these marks constitute only external appearances induced in the conscious awareness of those to be guided.⁸⁰⁷

However, in the present explanation, we need to use some classification of these marks as being in some sense things with form within the realm of conventional designation. In a similar vein, those Madhyamikas whose position accords with that of the Yogacāra⁸⁰⁸ analyze these marks in detail, feeling that they constitute manifestations that have validity on the relative level. To analyze these marks in accord with their interpretation:

To say that these marks are “mind’s own natural manifestations”
is not something that ordinary individuals could understand;
nevertheless, that fact that they can see these as having form
[4.186.b]
is something that holds meaning for them.⁸⁰⁹

The Sixty Qualities of Enlightened Speech [c#]

As for the sixty melodious qualities of enlightened speech, these are mentioned in the sūtra the *Secrets of the Tathāgatas* and are discussed in detail by the master Abhaya in his treatise the *Adornment of the Sage's Intent*.⁸¹⁰ That discussion is summarized in verse as follows:

- (1) Soft, (2) gentle, (3) pleasing, (4) captivating to the mind,
- (5) pure, (6) flawless, (7) exceedingly clear,
- (8) melodious and meaningful, (9) worthy of being heard,
- (10) nonaggressive, (11) musical, (12) controlled, (13) unthreatening,
- (14) unprovocative, (15) thoroughly soothing, (16) agreeable to the ear,
- (17) bringing a physical sense of satisfaction,
- (18) bringing a mental sense of satisfaction,
- (19) gladdening to the heart, (20) arousing joy and happiness,
- (21) completely without distress, (22) entailing knowledge of everything,
- (23) entailing discernment, (24) elucidating totally,
- (25) bringing delight, (26) bringing intense delight,
- (27) bringing knowledge of everything, (28) bringing discernment,
- (29) reasonable, (30) coherent, (31) without repetitiveness,
- (32) having the force of a lion's roar,
- (33) having the quality of an elephant's call, (34) having the melodious quality of thunder,
- (35) having the quality of a powerful nāga's speech,
- (36) having the quality of a gandharva's song,
- (37) having the sweet sound of the wood pigeon,
- (38) having the resounding quality of Brahmā's melodious speech,
- (39) having the carrying quality of a bird-man's call,⁸¹¹
- (40) having the pleasing quality of the melodious voice of a leader among the gods,
- (41) having the sound of a drumbeat, (42) never arrogant, (43) never faint,
- (44) understandable in every language,
- (45) never mispronouncing or slurring words, (46) never incomplete in its expression,
- (47) never timid, (48) never weak, (49) utterly joyful, (50) pervasive,

(51) comprehensive, (52) flowing, (53) relevant,
 (54) expressing itself completely in every language,
 (55) satisfying all the senses, (56) never condescending,
 (57) unchanging, (58) never hesitant, (59) resounding in all
 directions,
 and (60) endowed with the most sublime of all attributes.

Enlightened Activity [d]

The explanation of enlightened deeds and activity has two topics: an extensive explanation of the seven ramifications of enlightened deeds, and a summary on the basis of two principles.

Seven Ramifications of Enlightened Deeds [i]

Enlightened activity is spontaneously accomplished, without bias
 or distinction,
 integrated, uninterrupted, a myriad array of skillful methods,
 in accord with an individual's fortune, and completely protective.
 [4.187.a]

As for the enlightened activities of perfect buddhas, these do not involve ordinary factors in the slightest, neither a specific thought (such as "I will carry out this or that activity") nor any deliberate effort. Rather, they come about through the force of the previous processes of arousing motivation and developing aspirations on a vast scale. In this sense, these activities take place in the same way that rays of light shine from a wish-fulfilling gem without effort, or that the four principles of the dharma are taught through the sound of the great drum of the gods without deliberate thought being needed. Whatever the individual temperaments, attitudes, acumen, and latent potentials of those to be guided, the limitless and miraculous display of enlightened form, speech, and mind occurs in such a way that inconceivable benefit for those to be guided is effortlessly and spontaneously accomplished.

The orb of the sun has no bias and makes no distinction as to whether it will shine or not; still, its reflection appears simultaneously in all vessels filled with water, whether pure or impure, in accordance with the

circumstances in each case. Similarly, the enlightened deeds of buddhas (whether physical, verbal, or mental) are without bias or distinction in the slightest, but manifest simultaneously to those to be guided, in accordance with each one's individual fortune, whether excellent or inferior.

Countless rays of the sun's light are integrated and converge to perform a single task, such as causing a lotus blossom to open. In a like fashion, the timeless awareness and enlightened activity of all buddhas are integrated and converge to guide each and every ordinary being.

Within the realm of space, which is not created through circumstances, things that are created through circumstances come into being and cease to be uninterruptedly. In a similar way, even though the awakening to perfect buddhahood takes place within incorruptible basic space, enlightened activity takes place when the time is right for anyone to be guided but does not take place if the time is not right. This is the way in which the enlightened deeds of buddhas are forever uninterrupted.

In countless realms throughout the ten directions, and for as long as saṃsāra endures, [4.187.b] some buddhas appear as awakening to manifest enlightenment, some appear as turning the wheel of the dharma, and some appear as passing into nirvāṇa. Thus, benefit for those to be guided is ensured in any way that is appropriate, by means of a myriad array of skillful methods.

Depending on the respective heights of mountains, the rays of the rising sun may reach them in stages. Similarly, for those to be guided whose fortune is most excellent, or inferior, the enlightened activity of buddhahood will affect them to certain degrees, in accord with each individual's fortune.

Due to ordinary beings' merely seeing buddhas, their welfare is ensured in five ways that are completely protective, that is, they are protected from harm, from lower states of rebirth, from any lack of skillful methods, from the sufferings of the three realms, and from inferior spiritual approaches.

Summary [ii]

Concerning the second point, the source verses state:

Because it presents those to be guided with the basis for the spiritual path, the actual path,

and the consummate result, to summarize it can be subsumed under two principles:
spontaneous accomplishment and uninterruptedness.

In essence, the enlightened activity of victorious ones is an uninterrupted array, equal to space in its extent, of whatever activity is necessary to guide beings in any way necessary. Through its threefold miraculous display,⁸¹² countless beings to be guided are brought to the basis for the spiritual path (the approach that brings rebirth in the higher realms of gods and human beings); to the actual path (of accumulation, linkage, and the other paths); and to the consummate result (the fruition states of the three approaches). Therefore, to summarize, it can be subsumed under the two principles of its spontaneous accomplishment and its uninterruptedness. Concerning the former, the *Highest Continuum* states:

“For whom? By whom? By what means of guiding?
When? and where?”
Since they do not entertain such concepts,
the sages are always spontaneously present.⁸¹³

Concerning the latter principle, the same source states:

Because their certainty concerning their release was for the sake of others,
because they saw the similarity between themselves and ordinary beings,
and because their enlightened deeds are not yet complete,
their deeds are uninterrupted as long as saṃsāra lasts.⁸¹⁴ [4.188.a]

*The foregoing constitutes the commentary on the first part,
concerning a definitive conclusion about the fruition
in the cause-based dialectical approach*

PART 2. THE MORE COMMON ATTAINMENTS IN THE VAJRAYĀNA

- I. Concise Presentation
- II. Specific Explanations
 - A. Introduction
 - B. Extensive Explanation
 - 1. Enlightened Activities
 - 2. Siddhis
 - a. Lesser Siddhis
 - b. Intermediate Siddhis
 - c. Greater Siddhis
 - d. Khecara
 - i. Greater State
 - ii. Lesser States

The second part, concerning a definitive conclusion about the more common spiritual attainments of the mantra approach, includes two parts: a concise presentation in general, and a more detailed explanation of these more common attainments in particular.

Concise Presentation [I]

The results of the two stages of the mantra approach are the more common and the sublime.

In the Guhyasamāja cycle, they are attainments of mantra and of timeless awareness.

In the Kālacakra cycle, it is said that a single attainment comes from the seven empowerments, while three kinds come from following the path of the higher empowerments.

The results of meditating on the two stages of the path of secret mantra are summarized as twofold, more common or sublime; the earlier stage⁸¹⁵ leads primarily to the more common attainments, while the later stage⁸¹⁶ leads primarily to the sublime attainments.

In the Guhyasamāja cycle, these are described as two kinds of attainment: attainments of mantra and the attainment of timeless awareness. The *Subsequent Tantra* states:

Spiritual attainments such as invisibility are explained as being “ordinary.” But the attainment of buddhahood itself is said by the buddhas to be “the sublime attainment.”⁸¹⁷

Alternatively, it is explained that the lesser spiritual attainments are those of the four kinds of enlightened activity, the middling those of the eight major siddhis, and the most sublime that of buddhahood. The *Illuminating Lamp* states:

The purpose is also to be explained: there are rituals of pacification and other activities, likewise the eight siddhis, and buddhahood, moreover, which is the most sublime.⁸¹⁸

As for the way in which these two kinds of attainments are arrived at through the two stages of practice, the *Subsequent Tantra* of the Guhyasamāja cycle, for example, states:

Due to this distinction between the more common and the sublime, it is held that there are two aspects⁸¹⁹ to spiritual practice: the four vajras (in the more common cases) and the six branches (in the most sublime case).⁸²⁰

In the Kālacakra cycle, it is said that a single attainment comes from following the path of the seven empowerments, while three attainments (that is, karmamudrā, jñānamudrā, and mahāmudrā) come from following the path of the higher empowerments.⁸²¹ [4.188.b]

Having followed the path of the seven empowerments, those who have thus gained such states of spiritual attainment as those associated with the sword and pills can, in that very body, pass freely through the realms of gods and human beings, even flying through the air. They are capable of benefiting, and even annihilating, beings by using mantras of awareness. If these siddhas show their forms among human beings, these can actually be seen. They delight buddhas, bodhisattvas, spiritual heroes, and yoginīs,⁸²² who on the basis of this take these siddhas under their care. The siddhas then follow the path of the higher empowerments, and so gradually awaken to buddhahood. Since these siddhas are masters of awareness through material means, if they are deprived of such objects as their swords or pills, they cannot fly through the air, just as the goddess Manohari could not fly if deprived of the gem on the crown of her head.⁸²³

Then there are those whose spiritual attainments, such as the enjoyment of space, come from relying on the practice of karmamudrā. They, too, accomplish an enormous purpose for the sake of beings, benefiting or annihilating others through the power of mantras of awareness. Having delighted buddhas, bodhisattvas, *ḍākas*, and *ḍākinīs*, these siddhas cultivate the meditative absorption of the stage of completion, and so are gradually brought to buddhahood. If these siddhas, whose accomplishment comes from the practice of karmamudrā, move among human beings, even though they show their forms, they cannot be seen directly by others because they are imbued with the qualities of powerful mastery, such as subtlety and lightness.⁸²⁴ However, they do act for the sake of beings by emanating numerous forms.

Those who gain states of spiritual attainments associated with form by relying on the practice of jñānamudrā [4.189.a] become equal in status to gods in the realm of form. They do not move among human beings—indeed, their forms are not within the scope of others' senses. However, on the strength of their actual states of meditative stability, they act for the sake of beings in the realm of desire through their numerous emanations. In his commentary on the *Compendium of Abhidharma*, the master

Jinaputra⁸²⁵ states that these siddhas rely on the actual mental states of meditative stability without having to pass through the preparatory stages. Eventually these siddhas, too, are gradually brought to buddhahood through the meditative absorption of the stage of completion.

Those of the keenest acumen are been described in the lines, "When mind has been brought under control, subtle energy is also brought under control." In this way, within the sole context of mahāmudrā one brings the functioning of mind under control and so brings the functioning of what supports it⁸²⁶ under control. The analogy of a gem versus an ordinary stone illustrates how buddhahood is made fully evident.⁸²⁷ This is the interpretation of the venerable Rangjung⁸²⁸ and his followers.

Specific Explanations [II]

As for the specific explanations, there are two parts: a brief introduction that provides the context, and a more detailed explanation of these topics.

Introduction [A]

First, the source verses state:

The stage of development is the application of tantric principles that primarily ensure accomplishment of enlightened activities in the short term,
as well as lesser, intermediate, or greater siddhis. . . .

In conjunction with the seven empowerments, regardless of which form of the stage of development one practices (whether profound or not), the application of tantric principles primarily ensures more common spiritual attainments, such as the four kinds of enlightened activity, in the short term, as well as whichever degree of siddhis is appropriate under the circumstances, whether lesser, intermediate, or greater. Indirectly, this also leads to the most sublime attainment.

Extensive Explanation [B]

The extensive explanation has two parts: enlightened activities and siddhis.

Enlightened Activities [1]

As for the first explanation, the source verses state:

... Pacification, enrichment, power, forceful intervention:
these are the four basic activities, with an entire range of secondary
ones.

Pacifying, enriching, exercising power, [4.189.b] summoning,
slaying, banishing, driving mad, and paralyzing:
these are well known as the eight, or twelve, major activities.

As for these activities, the *Vajra Pavilion* refers to the four aspects of deity yoga:

Through a process of benefiting, there is pacification.

Vajrasūrya is enrichment.

Vajradharma is called "power."

It is Vajrasattva who slays.⁸²⁹

It also refers to the four underlying attitudes with such lines as:

Pacification with a peaceful attitude . . .⁸³⁰

and the four basic activities described as the four guidelines of the mantra approach, as it were, with such lines as:

At the conclusion, *svāhā* is pacifying . . .⁸³¹

In addition, there are secondary ramifications of each activity, in fact an entire vast range of alternatives. In the case of pacification, there are many kinds of pacifying activity, such as addressing illnesses and demonic influences. In the case of enrichment, there are many kinds of enriching activity, which focus on longevity, merit, wealth, and the like. In the case of exercising power, there are many kinds of activity, such as exercising power for controlling rulers or populaces, or for summoning. In the case of forceful intervention, there are many kinds of wrathful activity, such as slaying, banishing, scattering, and paralyzing.

Alternatively, some eight major activities are discussed: pacifying,

enriching, exercising power, summoning, slaying, banishing, driving mad, and paralyzing. In the fourth section of the later chapter of the tantra *Vajra of Delight*,⁸³² some eight activities are discussed: that is, activities of exercising power, forcefully intervening, destroying the forces of one's enemies, banishing, slaying, summoning, pacifying, and enriching.

As for the "twelve major activities," the source tantra of the Cakra-saṃvara cycle states:

Exercising power, summoning, scattering,
slaying, banishing,
baffling, paralyzing,
numbing, and (in a similar fashion) planting the kīla dagger,
rendering mute by robbing the power of speech
(and likewise deafening and blinding),
rendering sterile,
and changing one's own form:
these are the twelve major activities.⁸³³

Rendering someone mute and so forth can be considered to be one kind of activity, [4.190.a] that of "impairing the faculties."⁸³⁴ Then, even though there is no specific mention of pacifying activity in this listing, it can be added (since it is discussed often in earlier and later parts of the text) to give a total of twelve.

The foregoing is just a sampling. There is a vast range of enlightened activities; the *Vajra Dāka*,⁸³⁵ for example, speaks of more than a hundred stages of activity.

Siddhis [2]

The explanation of the siddhis has three parts (lesser, intermediate, and greater degrees of siddhis) and includes a supplemental analysis of Khecara, the "enjoyment of space."

Lesser Siddhis [a]

The eight lesser siddhis are those of pills, eye medicine, seeing underground,

the sword, the enjoyment of space, invisibility, immortality, and curing illness.

Alternatively, the eight are those of the sword, eye medicine, pills, foot ointment, alchemical powers, magical boots, mercury, and seeing underground.

If those who have gained the final degree of the path of accumulation then apply themselves to the short-term pursuit of this lesser degree of more common spiritual attainments, by engaging in conduct once they have attained the phase of meditative warmth, they can, without difficulty, become masters of awareness through material means, such as attaining the five levels of deeper discernment and the eight siddhis.

As for these eight siddhis, the *Request by the Four Goddesses* states:

Eight material means are explained as being secondary:
the siddhis of pills and eye medicine,
the siddhis of seeing underground and the sword,
flying through the air, invisibility,
immortality, and curing illness.⁸³⁶

Alternatively, the *Ocean of Dākas* lists these as follows:

The sword, eye medicine, pills,
foot ointment, alchemical powers,
magical boots, mercury, seeing underground:
the wise seek to accomplish these siddhis.⁸³⁷

Or, as the *Vajra Pavilion* states:

The accomplishments of eye medicine, of foot ointment,
of the sword, and of seeing underground,
of pills, of the enjoyment of space,
of invisibility, and of alchemical powers.
Those who are masters of awareness, world rulers,
or summoners of young holy women are practitioners who
delight me⁸³⁸
and gain these vajra states of spiritual attainment.⁸³⁹ [4.190.b]

The intent underlying this passage from the *Vajra Pavilion* is as follows: By applying medicine to the eyes, one can see the three worlds;⁸⁴⁰ by applying ointment to the feet, one gains fleetness of foot, by brandishing the sword, one can fly through the air; by revealing mineral treasures or vases of wealth hidden underground, one can satisfy the wants of beings; by placing pills in one's mouth, one can become invisible, unseen by anyone, or transform one's shape at will, like a yakṣa spirit (the aforementioned power of changing one's form falls into this category); by smearing a drop of certain materials on one's forehead, one can become invisible, so that nobody can see one; one's lifespan rivals that of the sun and moon, one's body becomes like that of a sixteen-year-old, and one can transform base metals such as iron and copper into gold (these three are termed "alchemical powers," and so there are references to "alchemical powers of longevity, body, and wealth"). As for summoning young women, this means that by accomplishing practices focusing on yakṣī spirits, one induces them to grant whichever of the eight siddhis one wishes. In this regard, when one considers the practice of the yakṣī spirits to be the general practice for attaining these great siddhis, one arrives at the total of eight by counting the siddhis of pills and invisibility as one, and counting those of alchemical powers as three; but if one counts the practice of the yakṣī spirits as a specific siddhi among the eight, one arrives at the total of eight by counting the siddhis of pills and invisibility as one, counting the alchemical powers of longevity and the body as one, and counting the alchemical power of wealth (that is, the power to turn base metals into gold) as one siddhi on its own.

Those who, on the basis of the foregoing, become masters of awareness, or world rulers, or those who gain the enjoyment of space, are considered among those with the most sublime siddhi.

In the *Concise Tantra*, there is much discussion of such siddhis as the sword,
the magic power of touch, alchemical powers, nectar, pills, magic potion,
fleetness of foot, and other topics, such as world rulers,
but these can be summarized as those of masters of awareness through material means, in a physical body, or with wealth.

In the “Chapter on Spiritual Accomplishment” in the concise version of the glorious tantra the *Wheel of Time*, we find the following:

The sword, the magic power of touch, the most powerful vital force, the nectar-laden fruit, the pills, the magic potion,
 [4.191.a] eye medicine,
 and foot ointment and wooden-soled boots: may you grant me these eight siddhas of the world!⁸⁴¹

And in the “Chapter on Timeless Awareness”:

In places beneath the earth, beyond the base of the central mountain of the universe, the eight great siddhis are truly to be found.

To the east are the sword, the most powerful “taste,” the nectar-laden fruit, the pills, the eye medicine, and the magic potion.

To the south are the glorious articles for fleetness of foot, an inexhaustible trove of treasures on the perimeter of the maṇḍalas.⁸⁴²

These passages refer to the eight great siddhis. Let us identify these one by one. Whoever bears the sword of siddhi is capable of feats of movement, such as flying through the air. The magic power of touch derives from a special substance that gives one the ability to transform ordinary rocks, or anything else one touches, into gold and other precious substances. The “most powerful vital force” refers to an alchemical substance that is a product of one’s spiritual attainment and that brings whoever ingests it a lifespan equal to that of the sun and moon and other benefits. The “nectar-laden fruit” is also a reference to alchemical powers deriving from spiritual attainment. The pills allow whoever ingests them to enjoy feats of movement, such as flying through the air. The magic potion is ointment, prepared such that it allows one to become invisible. The eye medicine allows whoever smears it on the eyes to see treasures buried underground. The foot ointment and wooden-soled boots both bring the attainment of fleetness of foot.

An alternative version of these eight siddhis is found in the source tantra of the Cakrasaṃvara cycle:

Seeing underground, moving through space, the sword,
annihilation and benefiting,
pills, eye medicine, treasures,
and fleetness of foot (or alchemical powers).⁸⁴³

The foregoing are just a sampling. There are masters of awareness of the five family types, or of ordinary weapons and other insignia; masters of awareness who ride such mounts as swans, *garuḍas*, or bulls. [4.191.b] There are masters of awareness with wealth, who enjoy, for example, the seven attributes of royalty.⁸⁴⁴ In ideal cases, there are those who can reanimate corpses; there are those who can bind gods, demigods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *rākṣasas*, and other beings to their service; as mentioned previously, there are world rulers who can bind the daughter of Brahma⁸⁴⁵ to their service. There are masters of awareness of mantra syllables and naming mantras. There are discussions of countless such cases of *siddhis* that are dependent on something or someone other than the *siddha*. In brief, however, these are all subsumed within the categories of masters of awareness through material means, masters of awareness in physical bodies, or masters of awareness with wealth.

Intermediate Siddhis [b]

The intermediate *siddhis*, which come from the common attainment of meditative warmth and conduct, are those of masters of awareness in the realm of desire, with status equal to that of gods in the realm of desire. They employ all mantras of awareness and *siddhis*, and have power over longevity. They possess the eight mundane qualities of powerful mastery, being subtle, light, governing, able to move everywhere, worthy of honor, able to ensure all that is wished for, imbued with stable joy and satisfaction, and possessed of mastery. Even though they move through this realm, ordinary people cannot see them.

As for the intermediate degree of the more common siddhis, those who have gained the final degree of the path of accumulation practice karmamudrā, one-pointedly cultivating the experience of the unity of bliss and emptiness, thus attaining the more common phase of meditative warmth, and then engage in conduct. With such attainment, they become masters of awareness in the realm of desire; that is, their physical bodies are of equal status to those of gods in the realm of desire, they can employ myriad mantras of awareness and siddhis, and they gain power over longevity.

This is also referred to as the state of a master of awareness in a physical body, albeit a body endowed with the eight qualities such as subtlety and lightness.⁸⁴⁶ In this context, “subtlety of form” means subtlety in the sense that these masters can send forth emanations of anything whatsoever in the inanimate world (such as a tree, or even a forest) and cause these emanations to dissolve. “Lightness” means they can send forth, and cause to dissolve, emanations of myriad forms of animate beings. “True attainment,” or “governance,” means they can send forth and dissolve both the foregoing kinds of emanations. “The ability to move everywhere”⁸⁴⁷ [4.192.a] means they can go anywhere at will. “Extreme clarity” means they are worthy of being honored by all *bhūta* spirits. “Serving as a source of all that is wished for” means they ensure that, as much as is wished for, all that is provided. “Reliability” means that stable joy and satisfaction are ensured since whatever attainment they have allows them to further attain whatever they wish. “Having mastery”⁸⁴⁸ means they have the power to annihilate or nurture beings.

Alternatively, subtlety refers to the transformation into a rainbow body, and lightness to the fact that these masters can manipulate at will all the elements of earth, water, fire, air, and space since their bodies are not physically obstructive (by virtue of not being composed of coarser particles of matter). In this alternate explanation, the remaining qualities are as before.

Thus, since these masters are endowed with the foregoing eight qualities of powerful mastery, even if they move among human beings in this lower realm of desire, they cannot be seen by ordinary people; but it is said they benefit beings through their myriad emanations.

Greater Siddhis [c]

The greater siddhis are those of sublime masters of awareness in the realm of desire and of masters of awareness in the realm of form, who engage in unelaborate conduct.

With status equal to that of gods in the realm of form, their qualities are far superior to those.

Their actual bodies do not appear, but they benefit beings through emanations.

Through the path of masters of awareness, one gains power over longevity,
and through the longevity of a master of awareness, one accomplishes buddhahood.

The greater degree of more common siddhis is that enjoyed by masters of awareness of the realm of desire. Based on the strength of their miraculous powers, they move from one pure buddha realm to another, receiving teachings from *nirmāṇakāyas*. They are close to attaining the first *bodhisattva* level, or else resemble those who dwell on that level.

And there are those who, when engaging in conduct, focus entirely on the unelaborate mode and become what are termed “masters of awareness of the realm of form.” Their bodies are equal in nature to those of any of the gods from the *Brahmakāyika* realm up to that of *Akaniṣṭha*.⁸⁴⁹ They possess the eight qualities of powerful mastery, but these are far superior to those discussed previously, being those such as extreme subtlety. [4.192.b] The actual bodies of these masters are not found within the realm of desire, but they act for the benefit of beings through their myriad emanations.

Thus, masters of awareness through material means or in physical bodies engage in conduct that is motivated by their intention to attain the more common siddhis. In the short term, this could be a hindrance to their attainment of the most sublime siddhi, so that in this single human lifetime alone they would not attain that most sublime siddhi. But since they also gain power over longevity, they can eventually awaken to buddhahood while still in this very body. It is with this understanding that masters of the past who emphasized the stage of development (especially *Śrīghoṣa*) made statements such as the following:

Through this very same path of masters of awareness,
 one gains the state of a master with power over longevity.
 And it is said that one attains buddhahood
 through this very same longevity of a master of awareness.⁸⁵⁰

Given that these siddhis are accomplished on the basis of a process followed from the outset, those involved in the tantric approach who practice the stage of development must accomplish them by relying on such methods as mantra repetition, fire rituals, sacred substances, and physical yogic exercises. For those who are involved on a more inner level with the most sublime attainment, however, it is explained that these siddhis are attained simply through meditative stability, without reliance on such aids as substances.

The minor activities such as pacification and enrichment can be attained in fairly short order by one's relying on deity yoga and practicing mantra repetitions and recitations to the requisite degree. But as for these major siddhis, those involved in the tantric approach begin by carrying out both the more ordinary and the distinctive methods of spiritual practice and engaging in conduct for six months. If, after this time, these siddhis still have not been attained, it is explained that the practitioners once again carry out the aforementioned practice and engage in conduct for six months, repeating this cycle two or three times over, until the siddhis are attained. If even this does not lead to the siddhis being accomplished, they carry out intensely wrathful methods as described in the teachings and thus ensure that they will definitely attain the siddhis.

Khecara [d]

Concerning Khecara, there are two aspects: the greater state of Khecara and the lesser states. [4.193.a]

Greater State [i]

In conjunction with these siddhis, the greater state of Khecara is one endowed with the eight qualities such as subtle form.

The full experience of one's realization is a naturally manifesting realm of complete purity.

In general, the term “Khecara” signifies simply one’s body flying through the air,⁸⁵¹ whether due to recognition of awareness through tantric practice, or consumption of the flesh of one reborn seven times as a brahmin,⁸⁵² or the circumstances of one’s rebirth due to the power of karma. But the term “Khecara” in conjunction with the siddhis that derive from one’s practice on the stage of development (both the most sublime siddhi and the greater siddhis) is what I am specifically explaining at this point. It can be treated in two ways: as a greater state and lesser states.

In the first place, then, there is the state of Khecara endowed with the eight qualities. These eight are discussed in the *Fronḍ of Pith Instructions*:

The subtlety of a body composed of extremely subtle particles; the lightness of that body; its pervasiveness throughout the three worlds; the attainment of the qualities of buddhahood; the experiential field of timeless awareness; the gaining of stability in that; the bringing of all beings under one’s influence; and one’s rebirth into a consummate state that ensures all that is wished for. As is said:

These are:
subtlety of form, lightness to the touch,
pervasiveness, true attainment,
extreme clarity, reliability,
endowment with power, and a consummate state ensuring
all that is wished for.⁸⁵³

The eight qualities of powerful mastery are described as subtlety of form and the other aspects: that is, extreme subtlety, lightness, extreme magnitude, the ability to move everywhere, the state of being worthy due to one’s clarity, the exercise of mastery, and the ability to abide wherever one wishes.

The present eight qualities and the aforementioned eight mundane qualities of powerful mastery are simply called by different names; [4.193.b] they are identical in meaning. As for “subtlety” and “lightness,” for example, the terms and their meaning are the same in both cases. The aforementioned quality of “governance” corresponds to either “pervasiveness” or “magnitude” in this present case because the meaning of all

three terms lies in the quality of pervading the three worlds. One should understand that similar correspondences exist in the case of the other qualities.

In actuality, this greater state constitutes the consummate fruition of the stage of development and the full experience of the realization of the stage of completion, so that one trains to further one's realization on the path within a naturally manifesting realm of complete purity.

Lesser States [ii]

The lesser states of Khecara are seventeen associated with the realm of form, six associated with the gods of the realm of desire,

and the indeterminate one associated with the human realm, which can be seen by pure yogic practitioners.

One may arrive there without discarding the physical body, or having discarded it,

or be led there by yakṣī spirits or siddhas (a temporary magical experience).

Some reach there through meditation; because this involves engaging in meditative stability

and attaining a rainbow body, they progress along the spiritual path, taking a firm stance.

There are many versions of the lesser state of Khecara, but if these are summarized into different types, they pertain to the seventeen states of the realm of form, the six classes of gods in the realm of desire, and the indeterminate state of Khecara in the human realm.

Of these, the state of Khecara in the human realm is such that, while one remains in the world of human beings, other ordinary people are unable to see one, although it is possible that a few truly remarkable individuals may be able to see and meet with one.

As for the state of Khecara in the realms of the gods, there are six states of Khecara associated with the six classes of gods in the realm of desire. In whichever of these one is able to experience, one enjoys the respective wealth of that state and a lifespan equal to, or even longer than, the gods in that state. This principle applies in a similar fashion to the realm of form, so that there are sixteen or seventeen further states of Khecara.

In all of the foregoing cases, there are two options, depending on whether one has discarded one's physical body or not. In cases in which the physical body has not been discarded, moreover, [4.194.a] there are two further cases: those who attain the state of Khecara through the power of their cultivation of the spiritual path, and those who are led to the state of Khecara through the power of yakṣī spirits, siddhas (that is, masters of awareness), or others. The latter case is simply temporary; regardless of what circumstances one experiences (whether higher or lower) or how long these last, this is not a case of "taking a firm stance."⁸⁵⁴

As for the state of Khecara to which one traverses through the power of meditating on the path of profound practice, whether one has discarded the physical body or not, one's body is refined into what is, by nature, a body of light, while one's meditative stability becomes sublime. Therefore, one progresses along the spiritual path, and so this is known as "the state of Khecara in which one takes a firm stance."

The foregoing constitutes the commentary on the second part, concerning a definitive conclusion about the more common spiritual attainments of the mantra approach.

PART 3. THE FRUITION IN THE VAJRAYĀNA

I. Fruition Aspect of Tantra

II. Nature of the Fruition Aspect

A. Essence

B. Enumeration of Terms

C. Distinction between Actual Fruition and Nominal Result

D. Causal Factors

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The third part, concerning a definitive conclusion about the consummate fruition in the Vajrayāna, has two parts: a concise presentation of the significance of the fruition aspect of tantra, and an extensive explanation of its nature.

Fruition Aspect of Tantra [I]

The fruition aspect of tantra is accomplished through three incorruptible processes of spiritual development.

It constitutes the consummate and most sublime spiritual attainment, mahāmudrā.

That is to say, the path that brings about spiritual accomplishment consists of the processes of developing one's merit, upholding discipline, and deepening one's experience of timeless awareness. All three of these processes are imbued with incorruptible timeless awareness, and accomplished without bias, circumscribed boundary, or limitation. This leads to the fruition of buddhahood itself; this is the fruition aspect of tantra.

This aspect, moreover, can be considered in both an actual and a purely nominal sense. The actuality is referred to as the consummate, or most sublime, spiritual attainment, that of mahāmudrā. This term is interpreted as follows:

In the first moment one attains utterly unchanging bliss and experiences the form endowed with the potential for all manifestations⁸⁵⁵ that one integrates with this bliss); whatever one experiences undergoes no fluctuation. Rather, due to what has always been the very essence of being, just as it is, [4.194.b] this state continues as such constantly, for as long as space itself endures. Furthermore, one does not ever fall outside that context. By virtue of the foregoing, the term "seal" (*mudrā*) is used. The term "supreme" (*mahā*) is used because this is endowed with three supreme factors: the elimination of flaws, realization, and ordinary mind. Hence, the term "mahāmudrā."

As for the term "fruition aspect," here this signifies that those who strive for the consummate result, the most sublime of all sublime states, find that this alone constitutes the perfection of any and all of their intentions. The qualifying phrase "of tantra" is used because this fruition is forever uninterrupted.

Thus, we have the expression "the fruition aspect of tantra, mahāmudrā."

Nature of the Fruition Aspect [II]

This involves five discussions: what the fruition aspect is in essence; an enumeration of terms for it; the distinction between what is actual and what is nominal; the aspects contributing to manifest enlightenment that are its causal factors; and the fruition aspect as the state of primordial unity.

Essence [A]

In essence, due to the cessation of breath and the stabilization of the masculine and feminine energies, moon, sun, and Rāhu⁸⁵⁶ are free of obscurations as the three vajras. Evaṃ means equal taste: primordial unity that has two dimensions.

One might ask what the fruition aspect of tantra (that is, mahāmudrā, the most sublime spiritual attainment) constitutes in essence. Once the practice of vajra yoga⁸⁵⁷ has been carried out to its conclusion,

(1) the “breath” (that is to say, the movement of the 21,600 subtle energies in the body) ceases;

(2) the masculine energy (that is, the downward movement of the lunar energy⁸⁵⁸) is arrested and becomes stabilized at the very crown of the head; and

(3) the feminine energy (that is, the upward movement of the solar energy⁸⁵⁹) is arrested and becomes stabilized in the glans penis.⁸⁶⁰

At that point, these energies then dissolve into, and merge as one with, what is figuratively termed the “heart center”—that is, timeless awareness, or mind (which is to say, ordinary consciousness) that is utterly lucid by its very nature. This gives rise to:

(1) “the moon free of obscuration,” that is, bindu⁸⁶¹ as the vajra of enlightened form;

(2) “the sun free of obscuration” (poetically termed “the aspirate”⁸⁶²), that is, the feminine *rajas* energy as the vajra of enlightened speech; and

(3) “Rāhu free of obscuration,” that is, mind as the vajra of enlightened mind.

The indivisibility of these three vajras is Vajrasattva: Vaṃ is the syllable of supreme bliss (and the figurative term for the indestructible bindu); E is the syllable of emptiness endowed with the most sublime of all attributes of cessation,⁸⁶³ within which the bliss abides such that there is an unchanging state of “equal taste.”⁸⁶⁴ Due to the attributes through which this expresses itself (that is, the properties of enlightened form [4.195.a] and the unchanging bliss of enlightened mind), it is said to be “endowed with the most sublime of all attributes.” Given the indivisibility of these attributes, there is primordial unity, which is the timeless awareness of buddhahood, fully evident. This has two dimensions: from one’s own perspective, the ultimate kāya of enlightened mind; and from the per-

spective of others, the more relative kāya of enlightened form. The source tantra of the Kālacakra cycle states:

Within the syllable E, the realm of space,
is found the bliss of all buddhas.
As for the syllable Vaṃ, Vajrasattva,
through the yogas of enlightened form, speech, and mind,
Bindu, the lunar, masculine *rasa* energy, is enlightened form;
the “delineator,”⁸⁶⁵ the solar, feminine rajas energy, is enlightened
speech;
the syllable A is the “bringer of darkness,”⁸⁶⁶ extolled as enlightened
mind.

These dwell completely within the realm of the space of E.
Through the yogas of enlightened form, speech, and mind,
within the maṇḍala of enlightened form, speech, and mind,
through the presence of enlightened form, speech, and mind,
the three realms abide as the very embodiment of purity.⁸⁶⁷

This is also discussed at length in the *Vajra Garland*, the explanatory tantra of the Guhyasamāja cycle.

Enumeration of Terms [B]

As for an enumeration of the synonymous terms for this, there are
primarily twenty.

But it can be described by many others as well, as many as ten
thousand.

An enumeration of synonymous terms for this fruition aspect of tantra (that is, mahāmudrā, the most sublime spiritual attainment, the embodiment of the timeless awareness of the tathāgatas) is given in the first synoptic section of *Stainless Light*, which speaks of some twenty primary terms:

Nonduality, nonvacillation, indivisibility,
desire, utter unchangeability, supreme passion,
not tangible, not nontangible,
timeless awareness, courageous mind, total positivity,

absence of afflictive states, supreme afflictive states,
innateness, glory, awakened mind, bearer of bindu,
Glorious Wheel of Time, vajra,
yoga that is the very epitome of skillful means and sublime
intelligence.⁸⁶⁸

In addition, in a number of tantras (such as those of Vajradhara, Kālacakra, Hevajra, Cakrasaṃvara, [4.195.b] and Guhyasamāja), the deities, maṇḍalas, mantras, mudrās, states of meditative absorption, timeless awareness, and other topics discussed constitute, in their ultimate sense, many variant expressions of this fruition aspect.⁸⁶⁹ And *Reciting the Names of Mañjuśrī* speaks of this kāya of primordial unity as being describable by, for example, ten thousand synonymous terms.

Distinction between Actual Fruition and Nominal Result [C]

The actual fruition is supreme Vajradhara. The nominal results are those of the illusory body and of an ordinary being who has realized primordial unity; these results, respectively, are the flawless embodiment of timeless awareness and a flawed embodiment.

It can be determined that the fruition aspect of tantra is twofold: the actual fruition and the nominal results. The actual fruition is that of supreme Vajradhara, the powerful state of mastery over all family types. The nominal results are those of the illusory body and of an ordinary being who has realized primordial unity. The latter case is the flawed embodiment of one who is still on the path of training, while the former is the flawless embodiment of timeless awareness of one who has gained the path of no more training. The illusory body is also termed that of “a master of awareness” and “rainbow body”; it constitutes a complete transcendence of the three realms.

Causal Factors [D]

Fourth, the aspects contributing to manifest enlightenment that are the causal factors of the fruition are explained in five ways: the working basis;

the essence; the methods of application; the specific issues; and the conclusion of the discussion.

Working Basis [1]

The working basis for the causes (the aspects contributing to manifest enlightenment) is the impure illusory body.

Given that the causes that bring about the state of primordial unity that involves no more training are the developmental aspects contributing to manifest enlightenment, the working basis for these causes is the impure illusory body.

That is to say, the ground for spiritual accomplishment is the genuine body that constitutes the unity of subtle energy and mind. What ensures the accomplishment is the isolation of mind,⁸⁷⁰ which is to say, the consummate anticipatory experience of utter lucidity.⁸⁷¹ This ensures that the three avenues of consciousness are imbued with bliss and stabilized, which leads to the special manifestation in the mind of the form of the deity. Even the subtle energy that supports the bliss expresses itself in the form of the deity and the two merge.⁸⁷² However, since the afflictive obscurations have not yet been eliminated, this basis is termed “the impure illusory body.”

Essence [2]

Concerning the second topic, the source verses state:

**In essence, the fruition constitutes timeless awareness associated
with the path of seeing,
in which the eighty overt patterns of thought have been eliminated.
... [4.196.a]**

In essence, this fruition aspect of tantra constitutes the timeless awareness that epitomizes the path of seeing (in which something new is seen that was not seen previously) and in which the potentials for the eighty overt patterns of thought have been eliminated; that is to say, timeless awareness in which dualistic perceptions have ceased. In conjunction with this awareness is everything that pertains to the anticipatory experience

of utter lucidity, in which any and all of the more overt perceptions based on dualistic consciousness have subsided.

Methods of Application [3]

This involves two methods: the external level of the aspects contributing to manifest enlightenment and the internal level.

External [a]

... As for the methods of application, by moon and sun one meditates on the phases of "manifestation" and "increase"; with the setting of the sun, on the timeless awareness of the phase of "attainment."

At daybreak comes enlightenment. These are the external aspects of manifest enlightenment.

In this method of application, when one is engaging in the developmental aspects contributing to manifest enlightenment, while the moon is shining on the previous evening, one meditates primarily on the timeless awareness of the phase of "manifestation." During the next day, one meditates on the phase of "increase." Once the sun has set, one meditates on the phase of "attainment." Then, with the coming of daybreak, manifest enlightenment becomes fully evident in the ultimate experience of utter lucidity.⁸⁷³ These particular time frames in the external world are analogous to the inner states of meditative absorption one undergoes; hence they are termed "the external aspects contributing to manifest enlightenment."

Internal [b]

At twilight, one performs a gaṇacakra feast and familiarizes oneself with the ongoing experience of timeless awareness associated with the empowerment into timeless awareness. At dawn one perceives ultimate reality.

With the internal aspects contributing to manifest enlightenment, bindu, which is a product of the elements,

constitutes the natural and pervasive radiance of timeless awareness when one awakens to buddhahood.

Taking the previous discussion of particular time frames into account, when twilight falls, one begins by performing a gaṇacakra feast and other rituals, and then joins one's consort in supplicating one's spiritual master. The master confers the empowerment into sublime intelligence and timeless awareness, and then teaches the participants the instructions that introduce one to the stages for attaining manifest enlightenment through the anticipatory phase of timeless awareness.⁸⁷⁴ This leads to the fourth stage of empowerment: by familiarizing oneself with the ongoing experience of that phase, at dawn the path of seeing (which constitutes manifest enlightenment) becomes fully evident.⁸⁷⁵ This process is described in both the father and mother classes of the Anuttarayoga tantras. [4.196.b]

If we consider the explanations given by the mahāsiddhas who were learned in the mother tantras, the process is as follows: When the empowerment is conferred, one engages in union with one's consort (who embodies sublime intelligence). From the melting of the white energy⁸⁷⁶ comes consummate insight into supremely blissful emptiness; this insight constitutes the aspect of "manifest enlightenment through the lunar energy."⁸⁷⁷ When the bindu⁸⁷⁸ is drawn upward together with the red energy⁸⁷⁹ of the consort (the woman who embodies sublime intelligence), it is the support for the consummate experience of the indivisibility of superlative bliss and emptiness; this constitutes the aspect of "manifest enlightenment through the solar energy." When the energies are absorbed into the crown of one's head, the experience of the unity of bliss and emptiness suffuses one's entire form,⁸⁸⁰ leading to the consummate knowledge that the distortions affecting one's being are primordially empty; this constitutes the aspect of "manifest enlightenment through the symbolic emblem."⁸⁸¹ From this comes the unifying and consummate insight into all phenomena, that is, the inseparability of objects and the subjective agents perceiving these; this constitutes the aspect of "manifest enlightenment through emptiness." It is due to this that enlightened mind constitutes dharmakāya, enlightened form constitutes sambhogakāya, and so forth—the aspect of "manifest enlightenment through the totality of the kāyas."

If we correlate these causal aspects contributing to manifest enlightenment with the situation of someone's attaining the path of seeing, there

is a context in which one's completely pure insight has not yet reached a consummate degree, and there is the accomplishment of the experience of primordial unity that still involves training (which is equivalent to the attainment of the two *kāyas*⁸⁸²). In the latter case, the "internal aspects contributing to manifest enlightenment" are so termed because they have no relation to specific time frames in the external world but are related to the internal stages of experiencing the unity of bliss and emptiness.

As for "*bodhicitta*"⁸⁸³ (in the sense of the white and red bindu) in the context of the path of seeing, these are, for the most part, products of the physical elements; when one awakens to buddhahood, however, the distinction lies in the fact that, at that point, these energies constitute expressions of the natural radiance of timeless awareness.

The previous interpretation⁸⁸⁴ concerns a process of transformation taking place in one's ongoing experience. The latter interpretation, although not clearly laid out in the *Guhyasamāja* cycle,⁸⁸⁵ is the tradition followed in the mother tantras. In the context of one's awakening to buddhahood, even an ordinary person engaged in the conduct of the immediate cause⁸⁸⁶ awakens to buddhahood by relying on such conduct.

As well, a human guru may not be present in physical form; nevertheless, in the context of these aspects contributing to manifest enlightenment, it is essential that the process rely on one's receiving empowerment, and so it can be buddhas who confer that empowerment.⁸⁸⁷

Specific Issues [4] [4.197.a]

Even the path of the transcendent perfections depends on this ultimate state.

In the *Anuttarayoga* tantras, it is said that even though one may have traversed the ten *bodhisattva* levels of the transcendent perfections, up to the point at which one is in one's final rebirth, still one must definitely rely on this tantric path of the five aspects contributing to manifest enlightenment.

That is to say, once one has traversed the path of the transcendent perfections up to the tenth level, buddhas confer on one all empowerments into all *maṇḍalas* simultaneously. One gives rise, also simultaneously, to states of realization, from those of the stage of development to those of the illusory body. Thereupon, with the conferral of the empowerment

into sublime intelligence and timeless awareness, the state of utter lucidity becomes fully evident to one. And within that very state, the first four developmental aspects contributing to manifest enlightenment constitute timeless awareness “on the very threshold of enlightenment.”⁸⁸⁸ Upon one’s moving beyond that, the *kāya* of primordial unity is attained; this constitutes the fifth aspect contributing to manifest enlightenment, the attainment of buddhahood.

In the *Lamp That Integrates Conduct*,⁸⁸⁹ it is explained that there are some ninety-six synonymous terms for this process of attaining manifest enlightenment within the state of utter lucidity; it constitutes the direct cause for the experience of primordial unity.

Conclusion [5]

In summary, having attained the state of illusory body, and relying on conduct,
within the state of utter lucidity induced by the two methods of meditative stability,
one brings the two methods of the aspects contributing to manifest enlightenment to completion, and so perceives utter lucidity in the ultimate sense.

If we summarize the implications of the foregoing discussion of these causal factors: Once the impure illusory body has been attained, one relies on any of three kinds of conduct.⁸⁹⁰ Through either of two alternatives in meditative stability (“instantaneous collapse” or “gradual dissolution”⁸⁹¹), one is brought to the indelible experience that all phenomena are empty. By cultivating this experience of utter lucidity over and over, one applies the two methods of the aspects contributing to manifest enlightenment (explained previously) in their entirety. Once this awakens one to the experience of the path of seeing, one comes to perceive utter lucidity in its ultimate sense.

Result [E]

The explanation of the fruition of primordial unity has two parts: primordial unity that still involves training, and primordial unity that involves no more training.

Primordial Unity That Involves Training [1]

The first explanation has five parts: the way in which primordial unity is attained (together with a discussion of the extent to which one can move in and out of that state); the general qualities that characterize primordial unity; [4.197.b] the delineation of the level of buddhahood; the analogies illustrating the vajrakāya; and an analysis of the kāya (with some additional specific points).

Process of Attainment [a]

Within the context purified of ordinary dualistic perception, the three successive steps of subtle experience unfold in reverse order, and primordial unity on the path of training is achieved.

One still moves in and out of that state: this tendency is only eliminated once the seventh bodhisattva level has been completed.

Once one has experienced utter lucidity in the ultimate sense, the kāya that still involves dualistic perception has truly been purified as empty. Within that context, as soon as one moves out of that state, the successive steps of subtle experience unfold in the reverse order from usual (that is, attainment, followed by increase, then manifestation). At the conclusion of these steps, the kāya of nondual timeless awareness is achieved, which constitutes primordial unity as experienced on the path that still involves training. One must still rely on conduct, causing one's mind to move in and out of the utterly lucid experience that is enlightened mind over and over, so that there is still some sense of a distinction between meditative equipoise and postmeditation. This is nevertheless termed "primordial unity," for under all circumstances one is never separate from enlightened mind (that is, timeless awareness as the unity of bliss and emptiness) and enlightened form is uninterrupted; alternatively, it is so termed because (given that the significance of "primordial unity" is one of nonduality) the more overt thoughts patterns based on dualistic perception have ceased.

As causal factors, during the path of seeing, subjective experiences arise in a methodical progression, from that of a mirage (the indication that

the earth element has dissolved into that of water) up to that of the non-duality of emptiness and lucidity, which is comparable to seeing dawn breaking in a cloudless sky (the indication that the phase of attainment has dissolved into the state of utter lucidity). When one moves out of that state, these experiences happen in the reverse order; one attains the state of primordial unity. There are, therefore, these experiences of moving in and out of the state of utter lucidity.

When the phase of complete attainment associated with the anticipatory state of utter lucidity takes place for the fourth time, there occurs a visionary state like that of one perceiving a limpid sky. But once the state of utter lucidity in the ultimate sense has been attained, thereafter there can be no issue of clarity versus obscurity, no vacillation or change; so other than some metaphor for clarity and emptiness being used to indicate this freedom from elaboration, the state is not being specifically equated to some visionary experience of seeing space. [4.198.a] This is due to the fact that the unceasing perspective of timeless awareness becomes, in fact, limitless in extent.

In the final phase of the seventh bodhisattva level, one enters into the state of utter lucidity, which constitutes the eighth level. Thenceforth it is impossible for one to move out of the state of utter lucidity.

General Characteristics [b]

The second case has three topics: the twenty-three aspects of primordial unity; the thirty-one auxiliary aspects (together with their further implications); and a summary of the meaning of the foregoing.

Twenty-three Aspects of Primordial Unity [i]

There is primordial unity of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa; of deeply ingrained negative emotionality and enlightenment;
of the tangible and intangible; of perceived object and perceiving subject; of naïve affirmation and nihilistic denial;
of compassion and emptiness; of skillful means and sublime intelligence; of what entails residual traces and what does not;
of the two aspects of the lack of identity; of illusory body and utter lucidity; of instantaneous collapse and gradual dissolution;

of the two levels of truth; of focus; of sleep and waking
 consciousness; of meditative equipoise and postmeditation;
 of what is substantial and nonsubstantial; of mindfulness and its
 absence; of bliss and emptiness;
 of the object and agent of action; of development and completion;
 of purity and impurity; and of what has form and what is
 formless.

These are the twenty-three aspects. . . .

The *Five Stages* speaks of these twenty-three aspects of primordial unity, while the *Lamp That Integrates Conduct* speaks of more than seventy;⁸⁹² the implication is that while there is but one timeless awareness associated with the developmental states of utter lucidity, all of these aspects are complete as its characteristics.

Since these characteristics are enumerations of the outstanding features, they are the characteristics of the state of utter lucidity in general, for they are complete on the path involving training, to say nothing of being so in the timeless awareness that requires no more training.

In this regard:

(1) There is the primordial unity of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, that is, the realization that saṃsāra is not something to be rejected and nirvāṇa something to be accepted.

(2) There is the primordial unity of deeply ingrained afflictive states and complete enlightenment, that is, the understanding that the nature of the phenomena that pertain to both deeply ingrained afflictive states and complete enlightenment is the same, that of the unity of bliss and emptiness.

(3) There is the primordial unity of the tangible and intangible, that is, the realization that concepts concerning both what is tangible (such as visible forms and sounds) and what is intangible (such as space) are identical in being primordially empty.

(4) There is the primordial unity in the nonduality of perceived object and the perceiving subject, that is, the cessation of dualistic perceptions in meditative equipoise, due to the realization of the state of equalness in which both perceived objects and perceiving subject are empty. [4.198.b]

(5) There is the primordial unity in the nonduality of affirmation and denial, that is, the elimination of all fixation on naïvely affirming or deny-

ing the existence of things, whether these fixations are instinctive feelings or conceptual elaborations.

(6) There is the primordial unity of compassion and emptiness, that is, experiencing all compassion as emptiness and all emptiness as compassion.

(7) There is the primordial unity of the masculine principle of skillful means and the feminine principle of sublime intelligence, that is, abiding in the supreme bliss of the union of masculine and feminine deities.

(8) There is the primordial unity of what entails residual traces and what does not, that is, since the vajrakāya is achieved, one is free of birth and death, and so there is no question of there being either some residual trace of the mind-body aggregates or none.

(9) There is the primordial unity of the two aspects of the lack of identity, that is, due to the insight that the actual nature of phenomena is such that everything is inseparable as the natural and primordial unity of manifestation and emptiness, one knows that the lack of identity in phenomena and in the individual personality are not cases of things that can be established to have separate status.

(10) There is the primordial unity of illusory body and utter lucidity: Initially, one attains the illusory body (the stage of “consecrating one’s own body”⁸⁹³). Then one carries out the stages of practice focusing on utter lucidity, until one experiences awareness in which tangible impressions are absent. One thus attains a state in which these two merge in having an identical essence.

There is the primordial unity of the inseparability of (11) instantaneous collapse and (12) gradual dissolution. The process of instantaneous collapse is one of allowing one’s very being to become, in essence, a state of supreme bliss; that of gradual dissolution is one of allowing all that one perceives to become that state of supreme bliss, whereupon one’s sense of self dissolves within that. Through these methods, there comes the realization that there is no real distinction to be made concerning the nature of the three phases of entering into the state of emptiness, abiding in that, and moving out of it; alternatively, the experiences of enlightened form and the unity of bliss and emptiness arise simultaneously.

(There are twenty-two aspects of primordial unity when the foregoing two methods are counted as one aspect; if they are counted separately, the enumeration is of twenty-three aspects.)

(13) There is the primordial unity of the two levels of truth, which is the insight into the equalness, in essence, of the two levels of truth.

(14) There is the primordial unity of focus, that is, there is focus both on suchness and on things in all their multiplicity; one enters into timeless awareness that perceives these two perspectives simultaneously.

(15) There is the primordial unity of sleep and waking consciousness, which is due to the fact that one's sleep constitutes the state of utter lucidity (other more ordinary states of sleep having been eliminated), there is no distinction to be made between one's being asleep or not, [4.199.a] in terms of one's spiritual development, or activities to benefit others, or ways of engaging in states of timeless awareness.

(16) There is the primordial unity of meditative equipoise and post-meditation, in that whether one is resting in equipoise or not makes no difference, in terms of the range of one's experience of timeless awareness being greater or less, or of one's experience of the unity of bliss and emptiness.

(17) There is the primordial unity of insight into the inseparability of what is substantial and nonsubstantial, which is the insight that all things, whether substantial or not, lack any independent nature of their own.

(Again, there exists a treatment of twenty-one aspects of primordial unity when the foregoing aspect and that of the tangible and intangible discussed previously are counted as one aspect.⁸⁹⁴)

(18) There is the primordial unity of mindfulness and its absence; since one is free of any lack of mindfulness or forgetfulness, there is no distinction to be made in one's experience of timeless awareness, regardless of whether one is making effort to maintain such awareness or not.

(19) There is the primordial unity of bliss and emptiness, which is the path that incorporates both desire and the absence of desire; this is the path of resting continually in the innate experience of supreme bliss, free of ordinary desire and attachment (since there is no longer any fixation), yet free of being the mere absence of desire (since one is not separate from the accomplishment of supreme bliss).

(20) There is the primordial unity of the object and agent of action, that is, no conceptualization of the three factors of object, agent, and action.⁸⁹⁵

(21) There is the primordial unity of development and completion, for regardless what methods one employs in meditation (the four branches of approach and approach,⁸⁹⁶ for example), one does not waver from the

unity of bliss and emptiness but instead experiences the form of the deity arising solely within nonconceptual awareness.⁸⁹⁷

(22) There is the primordial unity of purity and impurity, which entails insight into the distinctions between pure and impure embodiments of enlightenment,⁸⁹⁸ due to the perception that all obscurations have been forever exhausted.

(23) There is the primordial unity of what has form and what is formless; once one perceives that all that has form and all that does not is mind, there is the further insight that none of this has any independent nature of its own.

Thirty-one Auxiliary Aspects [ii]

... Thirty-one auxiliary aspects are complete.

The following aspects are also complete: the eight qualities of powerful mastery, the eight experiential qualities, the seven attributes of integration, and the eight enlightened qualities,⁸⁹⁹ which make for a total of thirty-one.

In addition, one gains other powers, avenues of total recall, and so forth.

When the kāya of nondual timeless awareness is attained, there are further qualities gained at that point. [4.199.b] One gains ten powers, including those over longevity and material objects, and four avenues of total recall. The words “and so forth” in the verse imply that one also gains, for example, the eight extremely profound and flawless modes in the process of complete liberation and the four states of authentic discernment. Thus, the words “in addition” are not meant to indicate any difference between these qualities and the ones discussed previously.

As for the four avenues of total recall:

(1) total recall through patient acceptance depends on individual syllables for mental focus, such as the syllable A; the realization that the syllable is unborn acts as a catalyst, so that one comes to gain a patient acceptance of the fact that *all* phenomena are unborn;

(2) total recall through mantra involves attaining the power for one's words to become true, and the capability to create new mantras;

(3) total recall through words is the capability to recall all the words one has ever heard, regardless of how many, without forgetting any of them; and

(4) total recall through meaning is the recollection of the meanings of all those words, just as was intended, without forgetting any of them.

Summary [iii]

To summarize, manifestation and emptiness are found to be identical in essence, the indivisibility of the kāyas and timeless awareness. This is primordial unity.

If we now summarize everything concerned with the fruition of primordial unity, it is the indivisibility of the kāyas and timeless awareness, that is, the stage of completion in which all that has been discussed previously is found to be identical in essence, from the standpoint of both what is manifest and its emptiness. This is termed “primordial unity as the consummation of all stages of completion.” Without straying from the utterly lucid basic space of the unity of bliss and emptiness, the rūpakāyas, endowed with seven attributes of integration,⁹⁰⁰ are uninterrupted in their manifestation, arising without bias or distinction.

Practitioners in whom such qualities of primordial unity are present are those maintaining the experience of primordial unity that still involves training. According to the intent of the *Five Stages*, when these practitioners engage in spiritual deportment to promote awareness of primordial unity, their qualities develop more and more, and they come into contact with the state of primordial unity that involves no more training. [4.200.a]

Delineation of the Level of Buddhahood [c]

Once that is attained, in reliance on the deathless kāya of timeless awareness,

one will definitely awaken to buddhahood. There are a number of variations to this delineation, however.

If one has perceived the anticipatory state of utter lucidity, one will attain nirvāṇa

during the intermediate state after death; if utter lucidity in the ultimate sense, in this lifetime.

With the consummate level of the stage of development, one arouses the realization associated with manifestation and increase;

one will definitely awaken to buddhahood in the next lifetime.

Once one has attained the state of primordial unity that still involves training, it is no longer possible for death to occur, and on the basis of that deathless kāya of timeless awareness, one will definitely awaken to buddhahood. There are, however, a number of variations to this delineation, due to there being progressive stages of realization.

Suppose one had attained the authentic illusory body but was not able to engage in any of the three modes of conduct. Death would occur, but rather than that event of death entailing the encounter with the ultimate reality of utter lucidity and the ensuing intermediate state after death, instead the kāya of primordial unity would be achieved. This could be described by the conventional expression “attaining buddhahood in the afterdeath state,” although this would not, of course, be dependent on the usual basis that is specific to the process of becoming in the afterdeath state.⁹⁰¹

The *Lamp That Integrates Conduct* uses the idiom “beholding the truth”⁹⁰² to connote the attaining of the consummate anticipatory state of utter lucidity, when it states, for example, that although one has beheld the truth, one may be attached to the residual traces of one’s karma.⁹⁰³

Generally speaking, even though śrāvakas directly “behold the truth,” they nevertheless experience the process of dying as the consequence of karma and afflictive states. In this Mahāyāna context, however, this does not take place.

We do find passages in Mahāyāna sūtras, though, stating that, for example, countless eons are required for “beholding the truth.” But while the situation is analogous to that of śrāvakas (that is, from the standpoint of one’s simply beholding the actual nature of phenomena, accomplishment comes about immediately), such statements in the sūtras take into account the benefit for others that ensues. The understanding is that one must develop, each and every moment, the capability to attain countless distinctive qualities consequent to this beholding of the truth, and so a long time must be spent in twofold development on a vast scale. Even

with respect to the way in which truth is beheld, the difference is like that between the water contained in a hoof print and that contained in the vast ocean.⁹⁰⁴ The difference—that what takes such time in that context⁹⁰⁵ is achieved in a very short time in this one⁹⁰⁶—can be accounted for by the skill in means involved in the latter case. [4.200.b]

Given the foregoing, once one has attained the state of primordial unity that still involves training, one has beheld the truth, which means that one will attain nirvāṇa during the intermediate state after death. Once one has attained the state of utter lucidity in the ultimate sense, that more direct beholding of the truth means that one will definitely attain nirvāṇa in this lifetime.

Once one has practiced the stage of development to a consummate degree, with the arousal simply of the realization associated with the subtle experiences of manifestation and increase, one's progress is still delayed by a single lifetime (which is to say, one will definitely awaken to buddhahood in the next lifetime).

Analogies Illustrating the Vajrakāya [d]

An illusionist's trick, the reflection of the moon in water, a hallucination, a mirage, a dream image, an echo, an optical illusion, a city of the gandharvas, a rainbow, a flash of lightning, bubbles on water, and a reflection in a mirror:
these are the twelve analogies that illustrate the vajrakāya.

The vajrakāya, the illusory body that is consequent on the consummate anticipatory state of utter lucidity, is the form of a deity that is formed simply of the unity of subtle energy and mind. The following are the analogies that illustrate it, according to the relevant passage in the *Compendium concerning the Glorious Vajra of Timeless Awareness*.⁹⁰⁷

(1) It is comparable to an illusionist's trick; while it cannot be found to exist with some finite essence, due to causes and conditions, it nonetheless manifests as though it did.

(2) It is comparable to the reflection of the moon in water, in that its presence can extend anywhere.⁹⁰⁸

(3) It is comparable to a hallucination (or a shadow), in that it consti-

tutes the projection of a form in the shape of a body,⁹⁰⁹ even though it is devoid of flesh and bone.

(4) It is comparable to a mirage, in that it can cause many emanations to proliferate or diminish in number.

(5) It is comparable to a dream image, in that it is formed from the simple unity of subtle energy and mind.

(6) It is comparable to an echo, in that it is identical in its continuity to the physical body (which is the natural consequence of karma), yet appears as though separate from it.

(7) It is comparable to a city of the gandharvas,⁹¹⁰ in that it manifests as a supporting structure with a living component supported therein.

(8) It is comparable to an optical illusion, in that in being one, it can present itself as many.⁹¹¹

(9) It is comparable to a rainbow, in that it is formed from the subtle vital essence of the five elements colors, or that its colors are clear and distinct.

(10) It is comparable to lightning, in that just as a flash of lightning, which can illuminate an entire realm, shines forth from among the clouds, this body's radiance shines forth through the corporeal body.

(11) It is comparable to bubbles forming on water, in that it develops as something that occurs naturally and suddenly, without premeditation, within the context of emptiness. [4.201.a]

(12) It is comparable to a reflection in a mirror, in that the limbs and parts are simultaneously complete.

Each of these analogies that illustrate the vajrakāya highlights a particular aspect of its characteristics, and so these twelve characteristics are complete in it.

Analysis of the Kāya [e]

Without the aggregates being impaired, there is simply the kāya of timeless awareness.

With their impairment, there is the kāya of timeless awareness of a master of awareness,

involving meditative absorption, having levels of deeper

discernment, engaging in conduct for the sake of beings,

not being subject to ordinary desire, enjoying supreme bliss,

transcending the usual limits of longevity,

and constituting a mental embodiment: It is endowed with these seven distinctive attributes.

One might ask, "What constitutes the difference between the state of a master of awareness and the kāya of timeless awareness?" As long as the gestalt of the mind-body aggregates remains unimpaired, there is simply "the kāya of timeless awareness." When this is impaired (which is to say, when the continuity of the aggregates that are the natural consequences of karma has been interrupted) due to karma or meditative absorption, there is what is termed the "the kāya of timeless awareness of a master of awareness."

The state of a master of awareness, moreover, is one of constantly maintaining meditative absorption; of being endowed with the five levels of deeper discernment; of engaging in conduct for the sake of beings in myriad realms; of not being subject to ordinary desires and fixations; of enjoying supreme bliss with respect to a limitless range of desirables; of transcending the usual limits of longevity (which is to say, of being immortal); and of having an embodiment that is a mental projection, being formed simply from the unity of subtle energy and mind. Thus, this state is explained as being endowed with seven distinctive qualities.

Primordial Unity That Involves No More Training [2]

The second explanation, that of the state of primordial unity that involves no more training, has seven parts: the working basis on which it is achieved; the occasion on which (and the way in which) it is achieved; what primordial unity that involves no more training⁹¹² constitutes in essence; what characterizes it; the auxiliary attributes of what it is in essence; its distinctive attributes; and brief comments on the qualities and activity it entails.

Working Basis [a]

With the cessation of the three ordinary avenues of being, there is the embodiment of timeless awareness.

Primordial unity that involves no more training becomes fully evident

on a basis that is in every respect analogous to sambhogakāya.

Immediately in the wake of the first bodhisattva level, the kāya of nondual timeless awareness is achieved. What pertained to one's ordinary way of being, to the physical body and subtle channels, to the speech and subtle energy, and to the mind and its concepts, has already ceased. Therefore, this kāya of timeless awareness [4.201.b] is further edified, leading to the body of nondual timeless awareness that is in every respect parallel to sambhogākāya; this is the working basis for awakening to buddhahood, which is to say, for primordial unity that involves no more training becoming fully evident. However, this does not mean that one has not attained buddhahood in a single lifetime and in a single rebirth, although the impure mind-body aggregates have not been discarded but have only dissipated into basic space.⁹¹³

Occasion [b]

As for the occasion, when the external and internal aspects of manifest enlightenment have been finalized,
to the accompaniment of offerings and omens, one attains the state of a spiritual being of the consort of awareness.

As for the occasion, once both the external and internal aspects contributing to manifest enlightenment (as these were previously explained) have been finalized, to the accompaniment of a limitless array of miraculous displays and offerings and a magnificent abundance of omens, one attains the state of what the mother tantras term "a spiritual being of the consort of awareness"; that is to say, one gains the state of mahāmudrā, the most sublime spiritual attainment.

There is a particular way of explaining this found in the relevant chapter of the glorious tantra the *Wheel of Time*:

When the moon consumes the form of the sun, never is there
either day or night in the sky;
that is the period of time. Yogic practitioners dwell constantly in
the state of nectar in the center of the body.
Just as the moon rides in the sky with all its phases at an end, of
equal taste with the sun,
so when life force and downward movement come to an end, they
cease on the occasion of spiritual attainment clearly taking place
within the body.⁹¹⁴

The meaning of this passage is as follows: Externally, when “the moon” (that which consumes the nighttime) ceases, and there is “the form of the sun” (which is to say, the point before the actual onset of the day), there is neither day nor night in the sky; that period of time, at the break of dawn, is the occasion upon which one awakens to buddhahood. Internally, in the center of the body, yogic practitioners experience all the phases of the white energy of passion coming to an end, before the onset of the dark energy of the absence of passion, [4.202.a] and so awaken to buddhahood on the occasion that they dwell constantly in the sixteenth degree of the state of that lunar nectar.

To explore this analogy, the text is stating that, at the point where the phases of both light and dark have come to an end (the “dark of the moon,” before the onset of the first day of the lunar month), the moon is nevertheless present in the sky but “of equal taste” with the sun. In a parallel manner, once the upper, solar life force energy and the lower, downward moving lunar energy have become of equal taste and so have ceased to function, at that point (the sixteenth degree on the external and internal levels) one awakens to buddhahood.

The same source also discusses in detail the way in which this awakening comes about, and many parallel explanations are found in other tantras. For example, in the tenth section of the *Well-Sealed Locket* we read the following:

Next, for anyone who attains the state of a spiritual being of the consort of awareness, there occurs a magnificent display like the following:

The earth itself is delighted, gladdened, overjoyed, and quakes in six ways, causing a sound like overpowering music to resound throughout the realms of the māras. In the ten directions, shooting stars fall like the fire at the end of time, there is the roar of great oceans churning, meteorites fall everywhere, and at the same time the radiance of the fire of timeless awareness blazes, like the shape of the fire at the end of time. All the three realms appear within the depths of the consort’s birth canal.

Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Varuṇa, Indra, Rudra, Agni, Balabhadra, Sūrya, Candra, along with any number of yakṣa spirits, siddhas, gandharvas, kinnaras, mahoragas, sublime gods, masters

of awareness, water-born spirits, and others, and in addition the gods of the Trayastriṃśa heaven⁹¹⁵ approach and are truly delighted, making offerings of flowers. Viṇās, flutes, [4.202.b] kettledrums,⁹¹⁶ conch shells, trumpets, bells, tambours, and clay drums rest in space, constantly making offerings of music.

Daughters of the gods and of the rulers among masters of awareness all dance and play many kinds of cymbals. Kinnaras and yakṣas sing songs and dance. Taking joy in the one they make offerings to, they constantly bring delight with their shouts of, "Victorious one! Victorious one!" The gods dwelling in the heavens extol to the utmost the excellence of the one who is attaining this state. He or she is honored by the most excellent gods dwelling in the Tūṣita heaven, as well as by children of the gods, masters of awareness, and even the gods of the pinnacle heaven of Akaniṣṭha, who all come and respectfully pay homage, making offerings of myriad kinds of flowers, of rains of myriad fragrances, and of myriad kinds of incense.

What more extensive explanation needs to be given to you? The offerings made are the offerings that are produced throughout the three realms by the merit of the one gaining such a state of accomplishment.⁹¹⁷

There are many more descriptions such as this.

Essence [c]

In essence pervasive and constant, . . .

According to this tradition, both the kāyas and timeless awareness are, in essence, pervasive and constant. Both attributes are such that they apply equally to all phenomena, with no constraint of proximity or distance. There is pervasiveness with respect to all things because there is no arbitrary distinction such as, "It is valid in this context, but not in this one." And there is constancy because it is absolutely impossible for this essence to change into something of a different "kind" or to become interrupted.

The present discussions of the kāyas and timeless awareness as distinct

aspects that are in essence identical, and of the kāya of timeless awareness endowed with seven attributes, are interpretations from the extraordinary point of view. There are some who hold that mere emptiness is pervasive and constant but not that the kāyas are pervasive and constant, [2.203.a] while others explain that the meaning of “pervasive” is one of emanations occurring whenever necessary. Both interpretations would seem to be claims that sambhogakāya is some subtle body formed from the ordinary elements, but an ongoing and constant presence is absolutely impossible for the elements and whatever is formed from them. There may indeed be some circumstances under which what is merely characterized as a total negation can be defined to be an *aspect* of dharmakāya; but it does not define the kāya of timeless awareness endowed with seven attributes (which is defined as being pervasive and constant) because seven attributes cannot be enumerated in what is a total negation. Therefore, those who follow these two interpretations may have heard the terms “pervasive” and “constant,” but they have not understood what they mean.

Characteristics [d]

... characterized by supreme elimination and realization, ...

As for what characterizes it, it is the supreme state of primordial unity, embodying the greatest degree of elimination and realization.

That is to say, supreme elimination constitutes the insight that all limitless obscurations, along with the habitual patterns reinforcing them, are such that they have always, primordially, been nonfunctional. The sūtra the *Discourse Requested by Dhāraṇīśvararāja* states:

Divestment is not just the resolution of the ordinary rational mind;
there is primordial resolution, and therefore it is termed
“resolution.”⁹¹⁸

As for supreme realization, this constitutes unpremeditated knowledge of all phenomena (for example, of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, or of the ground and the path) comparable, for example, to the visions of a psychic performing a divination.

Auxiliary Attributes [e]

This has two topics: a brief introduction and a more extensive explanation.

Overview [i]

... primordial unity has thirty-nine auxiliary attributes.

There are many varying descriptions of what characterizes the auxiliary attributes, or qualities, of the state of primordial unity, but to summarize these, they are thirty-nine in number.

Extensive Explanation [ii]

This has five points: the seven attributes of integration; the eight qualities of purity; the eight experiential qualities; the eight qualities of powerful mastery; and the eight additional attributes such as subtlety and lightness.

The Seven Attributes of Integration [aa]

Enjoyment of the richness of being, integration, supreme bliss,
absence of any independent nature, compassion, continuity, and
absence of cessation—

since timeless awareness that brings power over these attributes
becomes familiar to one while on the path, the kāya attained is also
endowed with these seven attributes. [4.203.b]

These are also listed by the great master Vagīśvarakīrti as follows:

Enjoyment of the richness of being, integration, supreme bliss,
absence of independent nature,
being replete with compassion, continuity, and absence of
cessation.⁹¹⁹

The first of these seven attributes is enjoyment of the richness of being, which constitutes the complete range of major and minor marks of per-

fect form in their entirety. The second aspect is integration, which refers to union in equalness with the consort of pure awareness, the kāya's own natural manifestation. The third aspect is supreme bliss, which is the nature of being—that of abiding in what is, in essence, an innate state of bliss. The fourth aspect is the absence of any independent nature, which is to say the empty quality of being free of all elaboration. The fifth aspect is that of being constantly endowed with nonreferential⁹²⁰ compassion with respect to beings. The sixth aspect is continuity, the fact that both the kāyas and timeless awareness constitute an ongoing and constant presence. The seventh aspect is the absence of cessation, which is to say, the fact that enlightened mind does not become immersed in a state of cessation devoid of perception, nor is there any cessation due to the continuity of the rūpakāya being interrupted for a time.

In the context of an empowerment, the timeless awareness that informs the empowerment process is endowed with these seven attributes. In the context of the spiritual path, through practicing the stages of both development and completion, one becomes familiar with such awareness. And the kāyas of buddhahood one attains, moreover, are endowed with these seven attributes. These are general tenets in the intent underlying all the tantric source texts, and in particular they are emphasized by the great master, the venerable Jñāna, and his followers.⁹²¹

The Eight Qualities of Purity [bb]

There are eight qualities due to the purity of the six elements and the solar and lunar energies.

These eight qualities, then, are due to the purity of the six elements, the “sun,” and the “moon.” With the purity of the element of earth in its natural condition, one's spiritual strengths become limitless. With the purity of the element of water, one is never again subject to such flaws as illness. With the purity of the element of fire, all buddha realms are permeated with light. With the purity of the element of air, miraculous powers allow one to move with the swiftness of thought. With the purity of the element of space, one can go anywhere. [4.204.a] With the purity of the “sun” (that is, the red energy), one can display myriad emanations. With the purity of the “moon” (that is, the masculine energy), the continuum of enlightened mind is suffused with supreme bliss. And with

the purity of the element of consciousness, at all times one does not stray from timeless awareness as the unity of bliss and emptiness, but engages in that awareness throughout the three times without attachment or hindrance.

The foregoing are qualities that pertain to primordial unity. There are other things that are discussed as being positive qualities, for example, gaining the strength of Nārāyaṇa,⁹²² having a blissful luster, having a magnificent and resplendent radiance, being unharmed by such dangers as abysses, having the ability to become invisible, being able to manifest any number of emanations, casting no shadow,⁹²³ and gaining any of the five levels of deeper discernment. However, these are considered to be qualities that pertain to the more common siddhis.

The Eight Experiential Qualities [cc]

There are the eight experiential qualities of constancy, absence of torment,
soothing calm, oneness, bliss, immaculacy, joy, and inspiration.

The *Oral Transmission of Mañjuśrī* states:

And so, throughout the limitless cycle of saṃsāra,
there is constancy, absence of torment,
soothing calm, oneness,
bliss, immaculacy,
joy, and inspiration:
these are the eight supremely blissful experiential qualities.⁹²⁴

As this passage indicates:

- (1) there is constancy because the state of primordial unity abides for as long as saṃsāra endures;
- (2) there is absence of torment because it is unsullied by a conceptualization process focusing on, for example, perceived objects;
- (3) there is soothing calm because primordial unity that involves no more training has none of the burning torment of cognitive obscuration, and even primordial unity that still involves training is such that overt dualistic perceptions have ceased;
- (4) there is oneness because the two levels of truth are experienced

as inseparable, and conditioned existence and the peace of nirvāṇa as an equalness;

(5) there is bliss because there is none of the changeability of ordinary mind;

(6) there is immaculacy because there is freedom from errant states of confusion;

(7) there is joy because action takes place for the sake of beings without one straying from the profoundly lucid state of inseparability; and

(8) there is inspiration (or enthusiasm) because there is knowledge of how things simply are and of how many things there are, and so one is constantly resting in equipoise with respect to the actual nature of phenomena and to ordinary beings. [4.204.b]

The Eight Qualities of Powerful Mastery [dd]

**There is powerful mastery of the three secrets, miraculous powers,
omnipresence, states of being,
desired goals, and arousal. . . .**

In expanding on these verses (including the abbreviated reference to “the three secrets”), we may cite from the *Illuminating Lamp*, which contains the following quotation:

There are eight qualities: powerful mastery of enlightened form,
powerful mastery of enlightened speech,
likewise powerful mastery of enlightened mind,
powerful mastery of miraculous powers, of omnipresence,
of states of being, of desired goals, and of positive influence.⁹²⁵

That is to say, there is:

(1) powerful mastery of enlightened form, which is the displaying of countless forms simultaneously;

(2) powerful mastery of enlightened speech, which is the revealing of spiritual teachings in the languages of all beings simultaneously;

(3) powerful mastery of enlightened mind, which is the knowing of all objects of knowledge without using the ordinary conceptual process;

(4) powerful mastery of miraculous powers, which is the demonstrating of miraculous powers that are limitless and spontaneously present;

(5) powerful mastery of omnipresence, which is the pervading of all places and times and circumstances;

(6) powerful mastery of states of being, which is that of becoming a focus for qualities such as spiritual strengths;

(7) powerful mastery of desired goals, which is the accomplishment of all goals simply with the intention to do so; and

(8) powerful mastery of positive influence, which is that of causing any of the three degrees of enlightenment⁹²⁶ to awaken in the mind streams of countless beings to be guided.

These are called “qualities of powerful mastery” due to the command they bring in these areas.

The Eight Additional Attributes [ee]

... Subtlety and lightness are more exalted than previously.

These attributes of subtlety, lightness, and so forth are, in essence, the very ones that have already been explained;⁹²⁷ however, one should understand that the distinction in this context is one of the nature of these attributes being beyond the grasp of the ordinary conceptual mind because they have become more and more exalted.

Distinctive Attributes [f]

The distinctive attributes of this state have two aspects: that of the kāyas as the supporting factor, and that of timeless awareness that is supported.

Kāyas [i]

These are discussed in five ways: the realm of the kāyas; their essence; an analysis; the significance of the specific models of three (and four) kāyas; and the particular analysis into family types.

Realm [aa] [4.205.a]

Emptiness free of elaboration is the level of buddhahood; the bhaga⁹²⁸ of the vajra queen is the context for awakening to buddhahood.

Generally speaking, according to the explanations found in the context of the more common spiritual paths, the context within which one awakens to buddhahood is, in fact, described in a variety of ways. But the interpretation from the ultimate perspective, according to this approach of the supreme secrets, is stated in the tantra the *Vajra Garland*:

E is the secret vault of basic space.

Within the bhaga, the lotus that is the source of phenomena,
the yogic practitioner dwells on the lion seat,
displaying magnificent marvels.⁹²⁹

In this way, the source text uses a number of synonymous terms, such as “the realm of buddhahood,” “the vault of the basic space of ultimate reality,” “the bhaga of the queen,” “the source of phenomena,” and “the lion throne.” It is referred to as “the level of buddhahood awakened in every respect, emptiness free of all elaboration,” “the bhaga of the vajra queen,” and “the secret.” Moreover, the glorious source the *Well-Sealed Locket* states:

The attainment of a spiritual being of the consort of awareness is not localized anywhere, does not take one anywhere, and is free of beginning, middle, and end. It is a state of nonduality, yet permeates the entire phenomenal world throughout the three planes of existence.⁹³⁰

This being the case, the realm is not something with physical spatiality, nor can it be analyzed as closer or further from any place within the ten directions of the universe of world systems. This is because (as has been discussed previously) it is all-pervasive, solely the pure vision of timeless awareness itself, free of elaboration yet endowed with any and every potentiality, being experienced as a pure realm. The realm in which the enlightened vision of timeless awareness interacts with ordinary beings and ensures their welfare is the universe of all world systems in its entirety.

While it is certainly the case that when the manifestation of a buddha in an impure realm appears, there is actual engagement taking place, such manifestations are primarily reflected forms that fall within the range of experience that is accessible to bodhisattvas on any of the levels of real-

ization in their meditative absorption. It is this state of perception that texts describe as “buddhas as numerous as all atoms dwelling on a single atom.” [4.205,b] And the sūtra the *Definitive Commentary on Enlightened Intent*, in referring to

... the characteristics of utterly pure, empowering, discerning awareness ...⁹³¹

is explaining this perspective with respect to the immeasurable mansion. Therefore, in the ultimate sense one should not regard buddhas as separate from one another, in distinct pure realms.

Essence [bb]

In essence, the kāyas are the maṇḍala of timeless awareness.

In essence, the kāyas constitute the maṇḍala of timeless awareness. Once a single individual attains manifest enlightenment, all the maṇḍalas of timeless awareness without exception are ensured: for example, that of thirty-seven deities, embodying the transformation of the mind-body aggregates, the sense fields, and the components of perception; or that of thirty-two deities, embodying the transformation of one’s subtle channels and constitution.

As for what the four kāyas are in essence, this will be discussed below.

Analysis [cc]

Third, there are seven models for analyzing from one to sixteen kāyas:

(A) As for the first model:

Primordial unity is singular. . . .

The fruition aspect of tantra, since it entails the coming together of factors that are not subject to degeneration, can be termed “kāya” in Sanskrit, which can be rendered a “coming together” or a “dimension of enlightened being.”⁹³² As the *Brief Presentation of the Tenets of View* by Mañjuśrī states:

“Holistic sphere,” “aggregate,” and likewise “kāya”:
these are widely known to refer to a total amassing.⁹³³

There are detailed analyses of the kāyas that discuss from one to five kāyas, and even analyses of six, or sixteen, or more. Again, the *Brief Presentation of the Tenets of View* by Mañjuśrī states:

The Buddha, the lion of the Śākyas,
in accord with the acumen of ordinary beings’ intelligence,
spoke of one kāya, of two, of three,
of four, and of five.⁹³⁴

Of these, the single kāya is described as follows:

It is buddhahood, without beginning or end.
The original awakened state is indivisible:
it is the single flawless eye of timeless awareness,
the state of the tathāgatas, the kāya of timeless awareness.⁹³⁵
[4.206.a]

Given that this is, in essence, the single timeless awareness that is the primordial unity of emptiness (endowed with any and every potentiality) and bliss (utterly unchanging), ultimately there is just this single kāya of primordial unity. This is because this very awareness has abided primordially without undergoing any change into something else (even in the circumstances of saṃsāra) and because this itself is the single kāya that is the natural perspective specific to buddhahood.

(B) As for the second model:

... The two kāyas are dharmakāya and rūpakāya.

The previous source states:

Just as there is the rūpakāya,
so there is the dharmakāya of buddhahood.
In accord with the acumen of beings’ intelligence,
treatises speak of three sources of refuge.⁹³⁶

The two kāyas are: dharmakāya, which is defined solely by the perspective unique to buddhahood itself, and rūpakāya, which is defined by the perceptions of others still to be guided.

(C) As for the third model:

There are the three vajras, . . .

The same source states:

Due to the analysis into mind, speech, and form,
there is the proclamation of three kāyas.⁹³⁷

Nonconceptual enlightened mind is dharmakāya; enlightened speech, the inviolable and innately present vibration of being, is sambhogakāya; and enlightened form, endowed with any and every potentiality, is nirmāṇakāya. Alternatively, emptiness is explained to be dharmakāya, bliss to be sambhogakāya, and lucidity to be nirmāṇakāya.

The reflected forms that manifest to those who are to be guided, whether nirmāṇakāyas adorned with major and minor marks of perfect form, or even such things as mountains and forests, are all reflected forms that bring benefit and well-being to ordinary beings, and so constitute the form vajra, or nirmāṇakāya. All reflected sounds, from those of the twelve branches of the Buddha's sublime teachings⁹³⁸ to those of any and all objects of knowledge, constitute the speech vajra, or sambhogakāya. The kāya that is the unity of unchanging bliss [4.206.b] and emptiness endowed with the most sublime of all attributes constitutes the mind vajra, or dharmakāya.

There is an alternative explanation of the Three Jewels (buddha, dharma, and saṅgha) being the three kāyas, but this is subsumed within that of the three vajras.

(D) As for the fourth model:

. . . and adding the kāya of innate presence makes four.

There are four kāyas when one adds the svabhāvikakāya (enlightened dimension of the very essence of being itself) of innate presence, or mahā-sukhakāya (supremely blissful dimension of enlightened being), to the three kāyas. The previous source states:

It is truly explained that the kāyas are four:
 svabhāvikakāya, sambhogakāya,
 nirmāṇakāya, and dharmakāya,
 as well as the enlightened deeds they entail.⁹³⁹

In this regard, the Kālacakra tradition provides two classifications:

(1) According to one of these interpretations, with respect to the ultimate kāya of timeless awareness, there is svabhāvikakāya from the standpoint of bliss as the perceiving aspect and emptiness as the perceived aspect; and dharmakāya from the standpoint of emptiness as the perceiving aspect and bliss as the perceived aspect. There is sambhogakāya from the standpoint of sounds as the reflections of emptiness, and nirmāṇakāya from the standpoint of forms as its reflections. Svabhāvikakāya constitutes the totality of four such kāyas. Dharmakāya is the dimension of enlightened being that manifests, by way of being its reflection, to bodhisattvas on any of the levels of realization, without wavering for as long as space itself endures; it is this that the master Buddhaguhya also refers to as “the kāya of manifest enlightenment.” The rūpakāya that is present in the pinnacle pure realm, and that does not fall within the perception even of śrāvakas who have taken rebirth in the purest mundane realms, is sambhogakāya; that which performs such deeds as revealing itself as a presence in the Tuṣita heaven, manifesting in whatever forms are appropriate, in accord with the capacities of ordinary beings, is nirmāṇakāya. This classification was accepted by the early masters of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. [4.207.a]

(2) Alternatively, there is a classification of the “kāyas of the four vajras”: emptiness as svabhāvikakāya; bliss as dharmakāya (or mahāsukhakāya); the speech that is the natural manifestation of buddhahood as sambhogakāya; and the form that is its natural manifestation as nirmāṇakāya. Alternatively, the form that is the natural manifestation of buddhahood can be classified as sambhogakāya and supreme innate compassion as nirmāṇakāya.

(E) As for the fifth model:

There are the five kāyas of the five family types, . . .

There are five kāyas according to such analyses as the five family types of Akṣobhya and the rest, or the five aspects of timeless awareness. As the previous source states:

Buddhahood is the totality of five kāyas.

The sovereign lord is lord of the five aspects of timeless awareness.

The lord of the five buddhas is the wearer of the crown,
bearing the five aspects of enlightened vision without
attachment.⁹⁴⁰

As for what characterizes these, the source continues:

All the limitless aspects of the aggregate of matter
constitute my⁹⁴¹ sublime nirmāṇakāya.

All the limitless aspects of the aggregate of sound
constitute my sublime sambhogakāya.

All the limitless aspects of the aggregate of mental events
are extolled as my dharmakāya.

All the limitless aspects of the aggregate of timeless awareness
are extolled as my jñānakāya.

All the limitless aspects of the aggregate of bliss
are my sublime and unchanging mahāsukhakāya.⁹⁴²

(F) As for the sixth model:

... and adding the universal principle makes six.

By adding the universal principle of the supremely blissful kāya of Vajrasattva, which permutes the rest, the total becomes one of six kāyas. In this regard, the glorious tantra the *Wheel of Time* states that the six family types derive from the six elements being free of obscuration. In accord with this statement, the element of timeless awareness is the family of Vajrasattva; the element of consciousness, the family of Akṣobhya; the element of air, the family of Amoghasiddhi; the element of fire, the family of Ratnasambhava; the element of water, the family of Amitābha; and the element of earth, the family of Vairocana.

Let us consider the interpretations of the mother tantras (including the Cakrasaṃvara cycle) in general. Since mind that is utterly lucid by its very nature transcends ordinary consciousness, it constitutes the transformation of the basis of all ordinary experience. But while all phenomena that entail conceptual elaboration partake of the nature of that mind, [4.207.b] it itself is unsullied by elaboration. This is Akṣobhya, the glorious heruka.

The emptiness of all phenomena being primordially unborn is the equalness that is free of any division into *nirvāṇa* versus *saṃsāra* (such as buddhas versus ordinary beings, for example). Without one straying from that state, one nevertheless takes great delight in whatever one experiences, with a sense of spontaneous presence that is free of all ordinary mental states. As well, in accord with the fortunes of ordinary beings, activity to benefit those beings is forthcoming without hindrance and without missing the appropriate occasion. This is *Amoghasiddhi*; and since engagement to benefit others is swift, this is also *Pāramāśva*, or *Aśvarāja*.⁹⁴³

Due to the insight into equalness, which is freedom from naïve affirmation or nihilistic denial, one does not stray due to error. This is *Ratnasambhava*, also known as *Vajrasūrya*, or *Tejorāja*.⁹⁴⁴

Unchanging subtle energy, while equal to space in its extent, is unborn; it is timeless awareness, free of all the structure of ordinary syllables and words, expressing itself for all beings, in all realms, at all times, and in all languages, in whatever way is necessary to guide beings in any way. This is characterized as expressing itself as the unity of sound and emptiness, and is *Padmaṇaṭeśvara*,⁹⁴⁵ or *Amitābha*.

The nature of a vision seen by a psychic performing a divination transcends that of even minute subatomic particles. Analogous to this is the fact that all that is simply the pure aspect of the mind's perception (of naturally arising pure realms, enlightened forms, and other splendid manifestations, which are immeasurable, unlimited, in infinite array) manifests as the elaborate display of a single timeless awareness. This is *Jinanitya*,⁹⁴⁶ or *Vairocana*.

The epitome of what is constant and sublimely pervasive does not entail a duality of constancy versus pervasiveness. This is the principle of the "sovereign lord."

All objects of knowledge are seen to be in every way like illusions. This is the nondual unity of bliss and emptiness, of timeless awareness of emptiness and of natural supreme bliss, in full evidence. This is *Vajrasattva* as the embodiment of ultimate enlightenment. This is also termed "twofold purity,"⁹⁴⁷ or "the fruition of the vajra holder." [4.208.a]

(G) As for the seventh model:

By analyzing the four *kāyas* into mind, speech, form, and timeless awareness,

there are sixteen; and there are other models of multiple
kāyas.

Once the sixteen degrees of transition⁹⁴⁸ have ceased in a state free of obscurations, one attains sixteen kāyas, which is to say one becomes aware of these sixteen aspects of suchness. An alternative model is one of arriving at a total of sixteen by analyzing each of the four kāyas into aspects of enlightened mind, speech, and form, and timeless awareness. As is said:

As for *nirmāṇakāya*, there are the aspects of enlightened form,
speech, and mind,
and timeless awareness, all merging together as one.
As for *sambhogakāya*, there are the aspects of enlightened form,
speech, and mind,
and timeless awareness, all merging together as one.
As for glorious *dharmakāya*, there are the aspects of enlightened
form, speech, and mind,
and timeless awareness, all merging together as one.
As for the *kāya* of innate presence, there are the aspects of
enlightened form, speech, and mind,
and timeless awareness, all merging together as one.
These are not the ordinary states of waking consciousness, the
dream state, deep sleep,
or (the fourth) the bliss generated by the two sexual organs.⁹⁴⁹

As the foregoing illustrates, one should understand that there are numerous classification systems of the kāyas that employ analyses according to the family types.

Three or Four Kāyas [dd]

The following is a brief explanation of the significance of the specific models of the three (and four) kāyas:

Dharmakāya is equalness, the nature of suchness.

Sambhogakāya is the enjoyment of full richness and the seven consummate attributes of integration.

Nirmāṇakāya is spontaneously accomplished enlightened activity.

Each of the two rūpakāyas has two further kāyas: the symbolic expression and the actuality.

The four kāyas constitute the freedom from obscuration of the four ordinary states

and the purified state of subtle energy, feminine energy, masculine energy, and ordinary consciousness.

By nature they are, respectively, unconditioned, unafflicted, liberating through compassion, and supremely blissful primordial unity.

Of all the foregoing analyses of the kāyas, the explanation of there being three kāyas is the most widely known model in the approaches of both sūtra and tantra. And in the tantric approach presently under discussion, it is extremely important to understand the innate purity underlying the model of the four kāyas. So let us analyze these in a bit more detail.

As for dharmakāya, with knowing awareness and what is known resolved in equalness, this is the nature of suchness as a freedom from all elaboration. [4.208.b] As for sambhogakāya, this is the oneness of the enjoyment of the full richness of all phenomena (with the elimination of mental images based on dualistic perceptions) with the seven consummate attributes of integration. And as for nirmāṇakāya, this is enlightened activity that is spontaneously accomplished.

To put it concisely, dharmakāya is one's own nonconceptual, self-knowing timeless awareness that perceives that all phenomena do not exist as such. It is this single timeless awareness that nevertheless knows everything, even down to the vibration of a single subatomic particle, all at once; knows that things have manifested without having to exist, do so manifest, and will so manifest, all part of the process of cause and effect, without a single exception. Sambhogakāya is the arising of the unceasing manifest aspect of that awareness in a myriad array as enlightened forms and pure realms. Nirmāṇakāya is timeless awareness that demonstrates to ordinary beings (who are confused concerning the nonexistence of things) the means to become freed from that confusion. These three are, in fact, facets of a single timeless awareness; this is the significance of the primordial unity of the three kāyas.

The nature of mind (that of supreme bliss and the eight experiential qualities, ultimately free of elaboration) is the kāya of innate presence. This, however, can be subsumed within dharmakāya.

For each of the two rūpakāyas, there are two further kāyas: the symbolic expression and the actuality. The symbolic expression of sambhogakāya is that which falls within the range of experience accessible to great bodhi-sattvas;⁹⁵⁰ the actuality is exclusively the timeless awareness of buddhahood, which does not manifest in the perceptions of any unenlightened beings. The symbolic expression of nirmāṇakāya is that which manifests in the direct perception of certain ordinary beings; the actuality is that of a transcendent and accomplished conqueror's timeless awareness as spontaneous fulfillment, which is to say, supreme innate compassion.

One should understand that the four kāyas constitute the freedom of the four ordinary states of waking consciousness, dream state, deep sleep, and the fourth (that is, the thought patterns produced by sexual passion) free of obscuration, and the completely purified state of subtle energy, feminine energy, masculine energy, and ordinary consciousness. Dharmakāya by nature is unconditioned; sambhogakāya by nature is unassailable by the afflictions due to suffering or the all-pervasive origin of suffering; [4.209.a] the nature of nirmāṇakāya is that of liberating through compassion; and the kāya of innate presence is by nature the supremely blissful state of primordial unity.

If I were to elaborate on these themes, there would be a great deal to say, but I will confine myself to this much for the time being.

Analysis of Family Types [ee]

The explanation of the analysis into family types has three parts: the basis for the analysis; the analysis on the basis of specific expressions; and the nature of these.

Basis of Analysis [1#]

Based on the specific expressions of twenty-one aggregates, the analysis into family types of maṇḍalas accounts for an infinite range of maṇḍalas.

There can be no analysis into family types, for example, on the basis of the ultimate nature of being. But because one can analyze these from the more fragmented standpoint of the relative level, there are unlimited models for analyzing family types, far more than one could possibly

count. But to begin our concise presentation, let us consider the basis for the analysis of all family types, according to the general Anuttara tantra approach. The *Gathering of Secrets*, for example, states:

In brief, the five mind-body aggregates
are renowned as the five buddhas.
The fields of the vajra senses themselves
are the sublime maṇḍala of bodhisattvas. . . .
. . . Earth is termed "Locana";
the element of water is Māmakī;
Those called "Pāṇḍara" and "Tārā"⁹⁵¹
are renowned to be fire and air.⁹⁵²

To classify the aggregate of matter as "being" Vairocana means that when discerning consciousness, which (in the context of saṃsāra) perceives what manifests as the aggregate of matter, has become transformed, the natural manifestation of timeless awareness itself becomes that of the maṇḍala of Vairocana (which is to say, the form of Vairocana, adorned with major and minor marks of perfection, as well as the associated pure realm and the infinite array of its splendor). It is for this reason that the gurus of the past used euphemistic expressions for awakening to buddhahood, such as "the transformed aggregate of matter is Vairocana" and "the aggregate of matter is, in essence, Vairocana." [4.209.b]

A parallel situation applies to the other aggregates. Thus that of sensation is Ratnasambhava; that of perceptions, Amitābha; that of formative factors,⁹⁵³ Amoghasiddhi; and that of consciousness, Akṣobhya. The eye is Kṣitagarbha; the ear, Vajrapāṇi; the nose, Ākāśagarbha; the tongue, Lokeśvara; the body, Nivaraṇaviṣkambhin; and the conceptual mind, Samantabhadra.⁹⁵⁴ Earth is Buddhalocana; water, Māmakī; fire, Pāṇḍaravāsini; and air, Samayatārā. The realm of visual forms is the vajra goddess of form; that of sounds, the vajra goddess of sound; that of odors, the vajra goddess of odor; that of tastes, the vajra goddess of taste; that of tactile sensations, the vajra goddess of the tactile; and that of concepts,⁹⁵⁵ the vajra goddess of the basic space of phenomena.

Thus the five mind-body aggregates, four elements, and twelve components of the sense fields,⁹⁵⁶ all taken together, constitute twenty-one aggregates. Due to the transformation of the ordinary mind that perceives what manifests as these aggregates, this brings about the twenty-one maṇḍalas

that are their analogues. That is to say, awakening to buddhahood takes place.

When a single individual awakens to buddhahood, there comes about anything up to an infinite array of maṇḍalas that are all subsumed as the natural manifestations of that individual's awareness. The tantra the *Vājra of Delight* states:

All of them, moreover, belong to hundreds of thousands,
to tens of millions, even to countless family types.
Therefore, family types are countless,
and these types themselves derive from the family of sublime joy.⁹⁵⁷

Analysis of Specific Expressions [2#]

The subsumed models are those of some ninety-five minor types,
while the subsuming model is that of the family types of the five victorious ones,
giving one hundred family types.
Each of the five major types has five subsidiary types,
and each of these is analyzed according to the four feminine consorts, again giving one hundred, and so on.
There are countless specific expressions. The freedom of the six elements from obscuration
gives six family types, and these can further be subsumed within five, or even three, types.
The dance of the many unfolds within the mood of oneness.

If we analyze what has just been discussed in more detail, we arrive at anything up to one hundred family types. Of the twenty-one aggregates discussed above, the realm of concepts and the conceptual mind [4.210.a] are considered as being common to all the rest. The remaining nineteen aggregates are related to the five family types in the fundamental context of the ground of being;⁹⁵⁸ each of the nineteen is analyzed further into five types, giving a total of ninety-five minor types that constitute the "subsumed model." As for the "subsuming model," this constitutes the five aspects of timeless awareness (that is, the five major types of the victorious ones of the five families), again within the context of the ground

of being. Adding these two models together gives a total of one hundred. This interpretation is stated in the *Lamp That Integrates Conduct*:

The aggregates, the components of perception, and similarly the sense fields⁹⁹

are each further analyzed into five according to the five types, a process blessed by the tathāgatas.⁹⁰

Where did all the suffering⁹¹ of saṃsāra come from?

Similarly, in the case of the five sense faculties and the five kinds of external sense objects,

each and every one of these

is constantly blessed by the five tathāgatas,

and they are blessed as⁹² five, or three, aspects of timeless awareness.⁹³

There is an even more detailed model that analyzes some ninety-five minor family types.

The Kālacakra cycle speaks of the following models:

(1) thirty-six types associated with the innate purity underlying thirty-six aggregates and components of ordinary perception;

(2) twelve types associated with the twelve sections of the human cranium (these twelve also derive from the six basic family types further analyzed according to the principles of skillful method and sublime intelligence; and from the three types of enlightened form, speech, and mind further analyzed according to the four kāyas);

(3) thirty-two types that derive from earth, water, fire, and air each being analyzed according to these same four elements, and then further analyzed according to the principles of skillful method and sublime intelligence, giving a total of thirty-two; and

(4) one hundred types that derive from the twenty finger- and toe-nails being further analyzed according to the five elements and added together.

In addition, in the context of the ground of being, the mirrorlike aspect of timeless awareness is Vairocana; the aspect of equalness, Ratna-sambhava; the discerning aspect, Amitābha; the aspect of spontaneous fulfillment, Amoghasiddhi; and the aspect of the basic space of phenomena, Akṣobhya. When these five major family types are analyzed accord-

ing to the same five, there are twenty-five types. When these are further analyzed according to the four feminine consorts, there are one hundred. [4.210.b]

Taking the three avenues of ordinary mind as being common to all the rest, there are five avenues of ordinary consciousness.⁹⁶⁴ Attendant on these are five kinds of formative factors; five kinds of perception (smallness, largeness, immeasurability, nothingness, and the perception that constitutes the pinnacle of conditioned existence); five situations in which factors come together to produce sensory contact;⁹⁶⁵ and the five divisions of the aggregate of matter (shape, color, changes in form, open cavities, and imagined forms).⁹⁶⁶ Because each of the foregoing is formed from the natures of the four elements, there are a total of one hundred factors.

From these models come further variations of countless, limitless family types. If these are summarized concisely, they are subsumed within six families that constitute the freedom from obscuration of the six elements,⁹⁶⁷ or five families (if, of the six, the family of Vajrasattva is considered common to the others). The minor types are included within their respective major types, and so are subsumed within the five families. And if a more concise model is adopted, within the context of the ground of being, the aggregates are subsumed within the three principles of body, speech, and mind. This is what is intended when the *Sphere of the Secret Moon* states:

Families are explained as being of one hundred types.

If these are summarized, there are five types.

Due to an analysis into enlightened form, speech, and mind, they can also become three.⁹⁶⁸

But all of these family types are solely the manifold display of the timeless awareness of primordial unity. As the tantra the *Authentic Conduct of Yoginīs* states:

All these beings are the mastery of buddhahood itself,⁹⁶⁹ manifesting like fine dancers and artists.

Anything and everything is what is termed "the sixth buddha."⁹⁷⁰

The dance of the many unfolds within the mood of oneness.⁹⁷¹

Nature of the Family Types [3#]

Because, in the context of the ground of being, there are the natural manifestations of body, speech, and mind, in the context of the fruition, the very nature of the family types is that of supreme bliss.

Because ordinary body, speech, and mind are, in fact, the natural manifestations of mind within the context of the ground of being, in the context of the fruition state, however many family types there are, [4.211.a] they are all subsumed within the unitary natural manifestation of supreme bliss. As the *Gathering of Secrets* states:

Consider your mind as like your body, your body as like your mind, your mind as like something uttered in words.⁹⁷²

Timeless Awareness [ii]

The second point, that of timeless awareness as what is supported, has three parts: the five aspects of completely pure timeless awareness; the seven aspects of timeless awareness as the very nature of things; and the ten extraordinary aspects of timeless awareness.

Five Aspects [aa]

Timeless awareness has five extraordinary aspects: the completely pure analogues of the five mental poisons.

The timeless awareness that is primordially integrated with the foregoing kāyas is fivefold or sevenfold.

If the first case, in the fundamental context of the ground of being, the five mental poisons (that is, the five afflictive states) entail conceptual thought processes, which abide in their essence, by their very nature, as the unity of lucidity and emptiness. By one pursuing a spiritual practice that uses skillful means to work with that abiding nature, without one's having to deliberately eliminate these poisons, they serve as the basis for distinctive states of meditative absorption that are the causal factors for

experiencing the five aspects of timeless awareness. This is the path of skillful means that relies on emptiness.

There are those who strive to incorporate a powerful intention of bodhicitta, wishing to gain spiritual attainments (the most sublime and the more ordinary) as a precursor to experiencing any and all of afflictive states—ignorance as the state of utter lucidity, anger as the meditative absorption of wrath, pride as the “pride” of deity yoga, desire and attachment as the timeless awareness of power, envy, and so forth. These practitioners apply this approach directly to these ordinary afflictive states and meditate accordingly, so that the five mental poisons become fully evident in their complete and innate purity as the five respective aspects of timeless awareness. This is skillful means that focuses on the relative level of reality. This interpretation is one of applying the principle of innate purity in an extraordinary way, according to which interpretation the five aspects of timeless awareness are accounted for due to the innate purity of the five mind-body aggregates, the five elements, and the five afflictive states. It is explained in great detail in such sources as the *Commentary by Vajragarbha*.⁹⁷³ [4.211.b] The significance of the five aspects of timeless awareness, corresponding to the five mind-body aggregates in their innate purity, is referred to in the following passage from the *Sublimely Unchanging State*, which contains citations from the source tantra:

All the collections of things are imputed forms
that are eliminated in emptiness, but this is not a blank
void.

All this is seen in the way that a young medium sees a
vision
when casting a divination with her mirror.

This verse refers, on the transcendent level of truth, to the aggregate of matter as the mirrorlike aspect of timeless awareness.

All things have become an equalness,
such that things abide in their unchanging oneness.
This derives from unchanging timeless awareness.
This is neither a nihilistic denial nor some naïve affirmation.

This verse refers to the aggregate of sensations as the aspect of equalness in timeless awareness.

All syllables, the building blocks of words,
truly derive from the family type of the syllable A.
A supreme unchanging state is attained.
There are no words, there is nothing to which words
apply.

This verse refers to the aggregate of perceptions as the discerning aspect of timeless awareness.

In phenomena that are not born
and are devoid of formative factors,
there is neither buddhahood nor enlightenment,
neither ordinary beings nor their life force.

This verse refers to the aggregate of formative factors as the aspect of spontaneous fulfillment in timeless awareness.

Transcending the nature of ordinary consciousness,
timeless awareness is pure and unsullied.
Phenomena, whose nature is that of utter lucidity,
abide within the realm of the basic space of phenomena.

This verse refers to the aggregate of consciousness as the completely pure basic space of phenomena in timeless awareness.⁹⁷⁴

These aspects are, in essence, as discussed earlier in the section on the approach of the transcendent perfections.⁹⁷⁵

Seven Aspects [bb]

Second, there are two discussions: the seven fundamental aspects themselves, and their forty auxiliary ramifications.

Seven Primary Aspects [1#]

Alternatively, it has seven aspects: profundity, extent,
pervasiveness, constancy,
supreme bliss, embodiment, and primordial unity. . . .

An alternative, extraordinary classification of timeless awareness and the auxiliary aspects it entails derives from the great tantras that are the gateway to the vajra approach, [4.212.a] as elucidated by the mahāsiddha Śāntigupta,⁹⁷⁶ a greatly accomplished master in this age of strife,⁹⁷⁷ in his personal teachings. In this classification, there are three general contexts: ground, path, and fruition.

In the first context, that of the ground of being, the seven key factors are:

- (1) profundity because mind itself is emptiness;
- (2) vast extent because it extends throughout all sensory appearances that one perceives;
- (3) pervasiveness because it is not subject to distance;
- (4) constancy because it is uninterrupted and by nature changeless;
- (5) embodiment of timeless awareness because the unceasing avenue for the expression of the lucidity of being manifests as a body;
- (6) primordial unity because there in the inseparability of manifestation and emptiness; and
- (7) supreme bliss because perceived object and subjective perceiver blend timelessly as one.

In the second context, that of the spiritual path, meditation conforms with both the ground of being and the fruition state because it makes fully evident those very aspects that abide as just described in the ground of being. In this present context, there is profundity, in that one meditates on things having no independent nature; vast extent, for although suchness accounts for the arising of all things in one's experience, one trains in experiencing these arising as embodiments of one's pure self-knowing awareness; pervasiveness, in that one is assured that suchness pervades all things; constancy, for one trains in experiencing the nature of mind as changeless; embodiment of timeless awareness, for one trains in experiencing this nature arising as the maṇḍala of deities; primordial unity, for one blends the manifestation of the deities' forms with the unity of bliss and emptiness, as one "taste"; and unchanging bliss, since

one relies on the process of “melting bliss” to highlight the innate nature of being.

One can apply a more detailed treatment of meditation techniques to these aspects, by analyzing them according to such topics as empowerment, the stages of development and completion, and so on.

In the third context, we apply this treatment to the timeless awareness of buddhahood, the fruition. There is profundity because the fruition entails knowledge of the way of abiding, just as it is, free of elaboration; vast extent, in that it entails timeless awareness that knows all things, interdependent and interconnected, in all their multiplicity; pervasiveness, or omnipresence, for it abides such that it permeates all things simultaneously (for example, the three kāyas, which constitute the way in which things naturally abide, extend to the limits of space itself, without being subject to distance, while the two rūpakāyas [4.212.b] appear in countless world systems for countless beings to be guided, such that whenever the occasion is appropriate for them to appear, they do so at that very point in time); constancy, for the three kāyas are not subject to destruction and do not ever change in essence; embodiment of timeless awareness, for buddhahood is awareness’s natural manifestations and so manifests to others as forms endowed with seven attributes of integration (the manifestation of myriad nirmāṇakāyas to beings who are to be guided falls within this category); primordial unity, that is, the inseparability of the kāyas and timeless awareness; and bliss, which is to say, the supporting and supported factors of unchanging bliss being inseparable, as the innate nature of reality.

In fact, the real topic under discussion in this section is the latter treatment.

Forty Auxiliary Ramifications [2#]

Concerning the second discussion, the first of the seven aspects (profundity and the rest) is profundity:

... Its profundity entails five characteristics:

the absence of independent nature, self-knowing awareness,

absence of fluctuation, nonconceptuality, and clear manifestation.

Timeless awareness as profundity entails five auxiliary ramifications, or characteristics. Because the experience of it comes about through a process of interdependent connection, it has no independent nature. It is self-knowing, in that it comes about, in essence, as simply a “being aware,” free of a duality of something to be aware of and something to be aware of that. Because its qualities are naturally what they are and are inseparable from it, from the standpoint of their very essence, these qualities undergo no increase. And as is said:

The element of water, gold, and space,
in that they are pure, are held to be pure.⁹⁷⁸

That is to say, given that timeless awareness is by nature forever free of distortion, it entails no factors to be eliminated that must be reduced. Hence, there is an absence of fluctuation. It is not some object of conceptual thoughts (which conceive in terms of ordinary characteristics) and abides as the epitome of nonconceptuality that cannot be so characterized. And that nonconceptual state itself clearly manifests in the reflected images of all things. Such are its five ramifications.

Concerning the second aspect:

Its vast extent applies to merit, timeless awareness, environment,
scope,
involvement, enlightened activity, and so forth. . . . [4.213.a]

Timeless awareness as vast extent applies to its causal factors (those of the vast extent of *merit* and the vast extent of *timeless awareness*);⁹⁷⁹ to the sphere of timeless awareness’s activity (that is, the vast extent of its *environment*); to the vast extent of its *scope* (because it takes all the factors involved in buddhahood as its frame of reference); to the vast extent of its involvement (because it involves the specific manifestations of all phenomena); and to the vast extent of its *activity* (because it is active in ensuring the welfare of all ordinary beings through any and all avenues). It is thus endowed with five characteristics, or auxiliary ramifications, of its vast extent.⁹⁸⁰

Concerning the third aspect:

... Its pervasiveness applies to space, time, continua, emptiness, and equalness. . . .

As for its pervasiveness, this timeless awareness is not subject to distance, but permeates throughout all of *space*. It is not subject to temporality, but permeates throughout all of *time*. It is pervasive due to that fact that it is not different in its essence from any one of the three *continua* of ground, path, and fruition. It is pervasive because *emptiness* is not something distinct from suchness. And it is pervasive because it perceives all phenomena in their *equalness*, nonconceptually. These are the five auxiliary ramifications of its pervasiveness.

Concerning the fourth aspect:

... Its constancy entails its being uninterrupted, without cessation, without subtle traits, unchanging, and inconceivable.

As for the auxiliary ramifications of its constancy, it is *uninterrupted*, for it is impossible for any interruption to occur in the primordial unity of the kāyas and timeless awareness. It is *without cessation*, such as the cessation that results in no residual traces being left behind.⁹⁸¹ The kāyas do not have subtle traits such as being made of minute particles of matter. As is said:⁹⁸²

As it was before, so is it afterward:
the true, unchanging nature of phenomena.

And so this awareness is, by nature, forever *unchanging* in any and all situations. And timeless awareness is *inconceivable* because it transcends the scope of the imagination of even the greatest heirs of the victorious ones.⁹⁸³ These five are the auxiliary ramifications of its constancy.

Concerning the fifth aspect:

Its bliss has seven ramifications: the three of integration, naturalness, compassion, [4.213.b] and the dissolution of conceptual mind and subtle energy, “melting,” and inexhaustibility.

As for the auxiliary ramifications of its bliss, enlightened form expresses itself in a form of integration, of masculine and feminine deities in union, the unity of skillful means and sublime intelligence. Enlightened mind abides in its naturalness as unchanging bliss. The expression of timeless awareness is that of supreme compassion, and it abides such that its nature is that of the inseparability of these first three ramifications. There is the dissolution of conceptual mind, of the relentless process of ordinary mental activity that is the antithesis of supreme bliss. There is also the dissolution of the subtle energy of karma that serves as the vehicle for that mental activity, and the cessation of that energy. This awareness becomes fully evident through the attainment of bliss on the basis of the process of "melting." And due to the natural presence of bodhicitta, it abides as the very essence of inexhaustible bliss. These are the seven ramifications of bliss.

Concerning the sixth aspect:

**Its embodiment has seven ramifications: born of emptiness,
entailing the cessation of suffering,
omnipresent, unwavering, being an embodiment of mind and
subtle energy,
emanating in an instant, and epitomizing major and minor marks
of perfection.**

As for the auxiliary ramifications of the embodiment of timeless awareness, it is born of (that is, derives from) the timeless awareness of the emptiness of everything. It entails the cessation of suffering, which is the perception imposed by impure karma. It is omnipresent. It is unwavering under any and all circumstances, which is to say it is not defined by any process of change. It is an embodiment that is simply a manifestation of mind, of a thinking process; and it is a quasi-physical embodiment that is simply the refined vital essence of subtle energy. There would be nothing to preclude this awareness revealing, in an instant of the briefest duration, all objects of knowledge subsumed within space and time.⁹⁸⁴ And it sends forth clouds of forms similar to its own, adorned with major and minor marks of perfection. These seven are said to be the auxiliary ramifications of the vajrakāya. In this regard, there are seven due to the embodiments of subtle energy and mind being counted as one ramification, but one

should not think of what is termed “subtle energy” as some inanimate matter that exists in its own right.⁹⁸⁵

Concerning the seventh aspect:

Its primordial unity has six ramifications: having no dualistic framework, nonconceptual, appreciating reality just as it is, involving no ordinary perception, ensuring benefit, and never wavering.

As for the auxiliary ramifications of its primordial unity, it has no dualistic framework since all dualistic perception has been eliminated. [4.214.a] It is nonconceptual, in the sense that the stirring of ordinary mind and mental events has been arrested; that is to say, any concepts that do not accord with reality have ceased. It appreciates the actual nature of phenomena, reality just as it is. Since it involves no ordinary dualistic perception, it perceives solely a vast array of innate purity. It manifests throughout all time and space, and in all ways, as ensuring benefit for beings. And because there is never any wavering from that state, the timeless awareness of Vajrasattva is the state of primordial unity. These are the six auxiliary ramifications of primordial unity.⁹⁸⁶

Ten Extraordinary Aspects of Knowledge [cc]

Concerning the third discussion, that of the ten extraordinary aspects of knowledge, the source verses state:

In addition, it sustains ten completely pure aspects of knowledge and so forth.

In this context, there are additional aspects, referred to by specific terms that are also found in the sūtra tradition, though with distinct connotations. Such aspects constitute the different functions through which the very essence of timeless awareness expresses itself.

Of these ten aspects of knowledge:⁹⁸⁷

(1) Knowledge of relative reality is such that supremely blissful timeless awareness knows anything and everything that occurs due to the interdependent connectedness of causes and conditions, and perceives these to be without independent nature, like illusions.

(2) Knowledge as understanding of phenomena constitutes knowledge as the aspect of skillful means. It has four applications. Knowledge as understanding of the phenomenon of suffering means that all specific expressions of the truth of suffering have been eliminated; instead, there is perception of the maṇḍala of the nature of things⁹⁸⁸ being that of their innate purity. Knowledge as understanding of the phenomenon of the all-pervasive origin of suffering is the insight that afflictive states are naturally occurring timeless awareness; that anything that is nominally meritorious or nonmeritorious (even anything that manifests as subliminal karma⁹⁸⁹) is a fragmentary expression that is primordially and utterly lucid by nature; and that all of this karma is, by nature, inseparable from the spontaneously present deeds of enlightened being. Knowledge as understanding of the phenomenon of the cessation of suffering is the insight that any factors to be eliminated are adventitious and have newly ceased, and that the basic space in which they have ceased is supremely blissful. Knowledge as understanding of the phenomenon of the spiritual path is the insight that all factors associated with the spiritual path are, in their nature, inseparable from the nature of mind (the nature that abides primordially as supreme bliss, naturally lucid and self-knowing) [4.214.b] such that these factors in turn abide primordially as its very essence.

(3) Knowledge as subsequent understanding of phenomena constitutes the aspect of sublime intelligence. It too has four applications. Knowledge as subsequent understanding of suffering takes as its frame of reference the objects of knowledge of the phenomenon of suffering and perceives these to be supreme bliss. Knowledge as subsequent understanding of the all-pervasive origin of suffering takes as its frame of reference the objects of knowledge of the phenomenon of the all-pervasive origin of suffering and perceives these to be without independent nature. Knowledge as subsequent understanding of the cessation of suffering is the insight that the elimination of all factors to be eliminated is primordially the case. Knowledge as subsequent understanding of the spiritual path is the insight that the inseparability of the ground of being and the spiritual path is itself such that their nature is primordially one of emptiness.

(4) As for knowledge of the Four Truths, this is not, in fact, anything separate from the foregoing knowledges as the understanding of phenomena and the subsequent understanding. However, if one identifies each of these truths simply by what it is in essence, knowledge of suffering

is the perception of the maṇḍala of all manner of suffering and its essence as that of supreme bliss.

(5) Knowledge of the all-pervasive origin of suffering is knowledge that the nature of this all-pervasive origin is that of timeless awareness (and the enlightened activity that this entails) and that even that knowledge is perceived in such a way that it has no independent nature.

(6) Knowledge of the cessation of suffering is the perception that suffering is by nature such that its cessation is primordially the case and that there is freedom even from the state of “being free” of adventitious factors.

(7) Knowledge of the spiritual path is the perception that the inseparability of the ground of being and the fruition abides as the very essence of the spiritual path⁹⁹⁰ and that that inseparability itself is primordially empty. In this context, it is very important that one understand the significance of the following: that what is seen is the fact that the truth of cessation is the nature of the truth of suffering, and that the truth of the path is the nature of the truth of the all-pervasive origin.

(8) Knowledge of other’s minds means there are levels of deeper discernment elicited by timeless awareness (which perceives all phenomena in their equalness), and these deeper levels allow for knowledge of the activity going on in the minds of all beings, whether ordinary beings in conditioned existence or spiritually advanced beings in the state of peace.⁹⁹¹

(9) Knowledge of the exhaustion of all negative factors is the perception that all phenomena that are factors to be eliminated are, [4.215.a] by their nature, such that their exhaustion is primordially the case.

(10) Knowledge of the unborn quality of things is the perception that all phenomena are by nature unborn and that all factors to be eliminated, while nominally removed through the process of the spiritual path, only came about adventitiously in the first place and henceforth can never occur again.

The foregoing are the ten aspects of knowledge from the standpoint of the level of buddhahood. The steps involved in knowledge of phenomena and subsequent knowledge as these relate to the path of seeing⁹⁹² are defined in relation to the afflictive obscurations, but they can also be understood through the reasoning used in this context. As for the eight steps of patient acceptance (that is, patient acceptance producing knowl-

edge of the phenomenon of suffering, patient acceptance producing subsequent knowledge of the suffering, and the rest), one brings patient acceptance to bear on the significance of what eight of the foregoing aspects of knowledge⁹⁹³ have understood and cultivates that acceptance in meditation.

“Well,” one might ask, “given that the nature of the sixteen degrees of joy (which are stabilized in a downward progression during the phase of the path of seeing) is explained in terms of sixteen steps, do they correspond one-to-one with the sixteen steps of knowledge and patient acceptance?” In fact they do not. In the first place, the sixteen steps of patient acceptance and knowledge are analyzed in relation to the realization involved; and while there certainly is some slight delay between the two steps of attaining knowledge and attaining the patient acceptance to which this leads, for the most part the additional steps are all cultivated at the same time within a single session of meditative equipoise (for other than being aspects of knowledge that can be distinguished due to the objects that are their frame of reference, they are, in essence, a single state of timeless awareness. The sixteen degrees of joy constitute a temporal sequence that derives from analyzing the progress one makes on the basis of bodhicitta.⁹⁹⁴ Although references are made to “the sixteen steps of joy on the path of seeing,” it does not follow that these steps are the sixteen steps of patient acceptance and knowledge.

Concerning the aspects of knowledge, *Reciting the Names of Mañjuśrī* states:

... upholding the realization of the eight aspects of knowledge. . .
 ... bearer of the ten completely pure aspects of knowledge.⁹⁹⁵

The definitive meaning of such passages was explained by the mahāsiddha Śānti in pith instructions that he extracted from a work entitled the *Compendium of the Tantras*, [4.215.b] which he said consisted of eight thousand sections.⁹⁹⁶

The phrase “and so forth” in the source verses cited above indicates that in this context there are other classifications that could be elaborated on, such as the twelve aspects of the meaning of truth, or the eight rates of initial entrance and stable abiding according to the secret mantra approach.⁹⁹⁷

The Qualities and Activity of Enlightenment [g]

Its qualities and activity can be understood from the previous explanation.

In brief, the fruition entails three supreme principles and two qualities,

that of being ongoing and constant presences, and that of being as pervasive as space.

As for the qualities and activity of enlightenment, they are in no way different from the explanations given in the section classifying the fruition in the dialectical approach, and so one can understand them from that explanation.

In brief, though, it does not matter how much one develops classification schemes to analyze the fruition in detail and enumerate its aspects: kāyas, pure realms, and so forth. That which constitutes the timeless awareness of completely perfect buddhahood abides, in the context of an ordinary being, as mind, which is utterly lucid by its very nature. Due to its very essence, free of all obscurations, that nature becomes fully evident, similar to gold being found in gold ore, and allows itself to be experienced directly. It entails supreme elimination, in that all limitless obscurations have been eliminated, together with their attendant habitual patterns. It entails supreme realization, for there is direct perception of all phenomena without exception (that is, the mind-body aggregates, components of perception, and sense fields), without any deliberate examination process, perceiving these to be like illusions, dream images, a city of the gandharvas, a seer's vision, and the like. And due to the force of that realization, there is supreme mental focus, which ensures the welfare of all beings without exception as a spontaneous accomplishment, with this enactment taking place for as long as space itself endures, yet without attachment. This, then, is the absolutely perfect and sublime fruition that can be characterized by these three supreme principles.

Such ensuring of limitless beings' welfare entails the two qualities of being constant and pervasive. There is ongoing and constant presence, abiding without any fluctuation [4.216.a], in that beings are nurtured in the endless realms in which they live. And just as the space associated with the realm of phenomena pervades it in such a way that it provides

an open context for all material things, timeless awareness is spontaneously present in its supreme pervasiveness, present in any and all kinds of ordinary beings, without being subject to the slightest distinction due to distance.

*The foregoing constitutes the commentary on the third part,
concerning a definitive conclusion about the consummate fruition
in the Vajrayāna*

PART 4. THE FRUITION IN THE NYINGMA SCHOOL

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 - iii. Timeless Awareness as Nirmāṇakāya
3. Elucidation

. . .

The fourth part, concerning a definitive conclusion about the specific fruition according to the tradition of the Early Translation School of the secret mantra approach, includes two explanations: the fruition aspect of tantra (as what is to be understood) according to the tradition of the

Web of Magical Display, and the three-stage process of gaining freedom according to the tradition of the vajra heart essence of utter lucidity.

Fruition Aspect of Tantra according to the Web of Magical Display [I]

This explanation has two parts: a general presentation of the fruition aspect of tantra (as what is to be understood), and the explanation of a more detailed treatment of this aspect.

General Presentation [A]

In the tradition of the *Web of Magical Display*, what is to be understood is the fruition aspect of tantra.

Let us briefly discuss the fruition aspect of tantra, which constitutes the consummate state, according to the tradition of Vajrasattva entitled the *Web of Magical Display*. According to the *Specific Presentation of the Web of Magical Display*:

Although the accomplished yogic practitioner, the supreme practitioner immersed in the state of genuine being, has made evident what is spontaneously present, just as it is, this is merely a conventional label; there is no duality. Nevertheless, it is referred to in this way.⁹⁹⁸

As this passage indicates, the basis for the process of refinement is the ground, or causal, aspect of tantra. Dependent on that are the adventitious distortions that are the factors to be refined away. Once these have been thoroughly refined away by the process of refinement, the consummation is one of this ground aspect's being experienced fully, just as it is.

That is to say, the basis for the refinement is the causal aspect of tantra, which is to say, buddha nature, which is primordially present, in and of itself, as a natural attribute in the makeup of all beings. To use an analogy, it is like a precious gem lying in a muddy swamp. The factors to be refined away are the obvious, and even the most subtle, adventitious distortions, that is, dualistic perceptions of what manifests do not actually exist; these distortions are analogous to the mud that is obscuring the

gem. [4.216.b] The process of refinement is the path subsumed within the stages of development and completion; these are analogous to water and cleansers used to wash the gem. As for the result of this refinement, once all the distortions have been refined away by one's practice of the spiritual path, the consummation constitutes the full experience of the qualities of enlightenment, just as these are present in the ground of being; this is analogous to the outpouring of all desirables that comes from the wish-fulfilling gem once the mud has been removed.

As for the derivation of the term, "Why," one might ask, "is the term 'fruition aspect of tantra' used?" The *Scriptural Synopsis* states:

The consummation of spiritual attainment is described as the
"fruition."⁹⁹⁹

That is, this is called "fruition" because it completely fulfills the wishes of those who earnestly seek the consummate state that is the unsurpassable and most sublime fruition, and it is called "tantra," or "continuum of being" because it is forever uninterrupted.

Detailed Treatment [B]

This involves three considerations: the accomplishment of benefit for oneself; the enactment of benefit for others; and an auxiliary discussion of the distinctions between the interpretations of buddhahood in the sūtra and tantra traditions.

Benefit for Oneself [1]

This consideration has three parts: the way in which this benefit is accomplished; what characterizes it; and the enumerations that apply to it.

Accomplishment [a]

The full experience of the very ground of being, just as it is, is free of any elimination or attainment:
it is the innate manifestation of the maṇḍala of kāyas and timeless awareness.

How is the fruition state, which has just been discussed, attained? With the full experience of the ground of being, just as it is, there is its natural manifestation as the maṇḍala of the kāyas and timeless awareness, with nothing eliminated or attained. The tantra the *Heart Essence of Secrets* states:

This marvelous and superb state of spiritual miracle
does not come from somewhere else.
Sublime intelligence itself, relying on skillful means,
occurs innately within such a context.¹⁰⁰⁰

Characteristics [b]

It is characterized as being already free of limitations without
these having to be eliminated,
and equal in taste to the enlightened intent of all victorious ones,
like water poured into water.

As to what characterizes the fruition aspect of tantra, it is already free of all limitations (such as being one thing or many) without these limitations having to be eliminated. Therefore, since this constitutes the full experience of what is truly meaningful yet indescribable, it is a freedom from any context in which it could be objectified, [4.217.a] and so proves to be of “one taste” (like water being poured into water) with the enlightened intent of all buddhas. The *Three Stages* states:

Because it is characterized in four ways,¹⁰⁰¹
this totality is neither identical to, nor separate from, anything.¹⁰⁰²

Enumerations [c]

The enumerations are twofold: an enumeration of the terms that refer to the fruition state, and an enumeration of its essential categories.

Terms [i]

As for an enumeration of the terms, these are “sugata,” “buddha,” and so forth.

Concerning an enumeration of the terms used to describe the fruition aspect of tantra, as the *Graduated Path* notes:

As for an enumeration of the extraordinary terms for this victorious state, they are inconceivable in number: for example, it is variously called “reaching the state of well-being,”¹⁰⁰³ “reaching the state of suchness,”¹⁰⁰⁴ “transcendent and accomplished conqueror,”¹⁰⁰⁵ “awakening and unfolding,”¹⁰⁰⁶ and “supreme delight.”¹⁰⁰⁷

Essential Categories [ii]

The enumeration of essential categories has two parts: the categories that manifest as distinctive features, and their inseparability within their essence of spontaneous presence.

Distinctive Features [aa]

In the first place, these categories can be enumerated extensively, to a middling degree, or concisely.

Extensive Enumeration [1#]

In essence, the ever-present aspects of the kāyas and so forth are unimaginable.

In essence, the factors entailed in the fruition (every one of the five aspects each of form, speech, mind, qualities, and activity) cannot be imagined by the ordinary mind. The *Web of Magical Display* states:

... the ever-present aspects of the kāyas are inconceivable,
the ever-present aspects of enlightened speech are inconceivable,

the ever-present aspects of enlightened mind are inconceivable, . . .¹⁰⁰⁸

As for the qualities of enlightenment, the extensive version of that tantra states:

Because of the adornment of the eye of timeless awareness, the pure realms and qualities are inconceivable.¹⁰⁰⁹

And as for enlightened activity, the *Heart Essence of Secrets* states:

As many atoms as there are in worlds throughout the ten directions,
the pursuits of the victorious ones are as numerous as those minute particles.
Emanations as inconceivably countless as those particles
are spontaneously present in the space of an instant.¹⁰¹⁰

Middle-Length Enumeration [2#]

Concerning the second enumeration, there are the five groups of the kāyas, speech, mind, qualities, and activity, and it is said that each of these has five further aspects.

Regarding the first group, the five kāyas:

The enumeration includes dharmakāya, sambhogakāya,
nirmāṇakāya, [4.217.b]
unchanging vajrakāya, and abhisambodhikāya.

If a specific enumeration is applied to the inconceivable scope of these categories, there are twenty-five factors entailed in the fruition state. Of these, the five kāyas are as follows:

(1) “Dharmakāya” (the dimension of the actual nature of phenomena) refers, in essence, to the consummate realization that is for one’s own benefit, that is, the freedom of timeless awareness in the immediacy of the ground of being.

(2) “Sambhogakāya” (the dimension of being enjoying its own richness) refers to the manifestation of forms endowed with major and minor

marks of perfection; while not straying from the context of dharmakāya, these forms manifest in the perceptions of those to be guided whose karma is pure (specifically, tenth-level bodhisattvas) and are the extraordinary indirect results of bodies becoming incorruptible.

(3) “Nirmāṇakāya” (the dimension of emanated form) refers to the manifestation of myriad forms that ensure benefit, appearing in harmony with the aspirations of those to be guided whose karma is still impure (that is, the six classes of ordinary beings).

(4) “Vajrakāya” (the dimension of immutable being) refers to the fact that, even though rūpakāya (dimensions of enlightenment manifest in form) manifests in two ways, these forms do not exist in their own right; rather, they do not stray from dharmakāya (or, put another way, dharmakāya and rūpakāya are indivisible).

(5) “Abhisambodhikāya” (the dimension of manifest enlightenment) refers to the fact that the foregoing rūpakāyas are spontaneously perfect in the pure presence of timeless awareness, so that, while never straying from dharmakāya, they can and do manifest in myriad ways that are in harmony with the karma of those to be guided.

Regarding the second group, the five aspects of enlightened speech:

The five aspects of enlightened speech are those of the ultimate unborn nature, the symbolic expression of enlightened intent, the utterance of words, the vajra state of inseparability, and manifest enlightenment.

These five aspects of enlightened speech embody the principle of effective communication between the five kāyas of teachers and the respective retinues. They are as follows:

(1) “enlightened speech as the ultimate unborn nature” (associated with dharmakāya), from the perspective that the actual nature of phenomena, though itself indescribable and inexpressible, serves as the basis underlying everything that can be expressed;

(2) “enlightened speech as the symbolic expression of enlightened intent” (associated with sambhogakāya), in that the symbolic expressions of this kāya present an approximation of ultimate reality to the minds of the retinue, in the way that a mirror aids in the removal of dirt that is already on one’s face;

(3) “enlightened speech as the utterance of words” (associated with *nirmāṇakāya*), in that spiritual teachings are presented simultaneously in languages and vocabularies that guide any and all beings in any and all ways;

(4) “enlightened speech as the vajra state of inseparability,” in that all these languages and vocabularies constitute the nondual unity of sound and emptiness, and so there is freedom from dualistic extremes; and

(5) “enlightened speech as manifest enlightenment,” in that all that is audible is spontaneously present within the scope of pure awareness, and so unimpeded in any way whatsoever as the “speech” that is the blessing of that pure awareness. [4.218.a]

Regarding the third group, the five aspects of enlightened mind:

**The five sublime aspects of enlightened mind are those of
nonconceptuality, equalness,
the liberation of beings, indivisibility, and knowledge of anything
whatsoever.**

These five sublime aspects of enlightened mind are as follows:

(1) “enlightened mind as a supreme nonconceptual state” (associated with *dharmakāya*) is timeless awareness of emptiness;

(2) “enlightened mind as a supreme state of equalness” (associated with *sambhogakāya*) is timeless awareness of equalness;

(3) “enlightened mind that liberates beings” (associated with *nirmāṇakāya*) is timeless awareness as ensured fulfillment;

(4) “enlightened mind as the indivisible vajra state” is discerning timeless awareness; and

(5) “enlightened mind as manifest enlightenment knowing anything whatsoever” is mirrorlike timeless awareness.

Regarding the fourth group, the five aspects of the qualities of enlightenment:¹⁰¹¹

**Realms of complete purity, immeasurable mansions free of fixed
dimensions,
pure and radiant luminosity, distinctive seats, and the wealth of all
delights:
these are the five aspects of the qualities of enlightenment.**

As for the realms of complete purity, the tantra states:

Buddha realms in all the ten directions, . . .
 . . . unimaginable realms of complete purity . . .¹⁰¹²

As for the immeasurable mansions, free of fixed size or dimensions, it states:

. . . immeasurable mansions free of fixed size . . .¹⁰¹³

As for the pure and radiant luminosity, it states:

. . . great masses of shining rays of light . . .¹⁰¹⁴

As for the distinctive seats and thrones, it states:

. . . on great thrones supported by lions, elephants,
 horses, peacocks, and bird-men,
 are sun disks, moon disks, and precious lotuses . . .¹⁰¹⁵

As for the wealth of everything delightful, it states:

. . . myriad musical instruments massing like clouds . . .¹⁰¹⁶

These and similar passages refer to the five aspects of the qualities of enlightenment.

Regarding the fifth group, the five aspects of enlightened activity:

Enlightened activities are those of pacification, enrichment, power, wrath, and spontaneous presence.

Accordingly, the activities are those of pacification, enrichment, power, wrath, and activities that are spontaneously present, as the tantra *Fragmentary Extract from "Stirring the Pit"* states:

Those whose minds are filled with thoughts based on afflictive states are made more gentle

and are pacified through the deeds of buddhahood. [4.218.b]
 Individuals who are bewildered and suffer from poverty and want
 are enriched with increasing intelligence and wealth.
 Stubborn individuals who cannot otherwise be helped or guided
 are guided and tamed through the activity of exercising power.
 Malevolent beings who cannot be tamed through compassionate
 means
 are annihilated through the wrath of forceful intervention.
 Thus, in the context of such mastery, activities are spontaneously
 present and unbiased
 toward the various kinds of beings who lack realization.¹⁰¹⁷

Concise Enumeration [3#]

There are two versions of the concise enumeration: a somewhat concise enumeration, and an extremely concise one.

Concise Enumeration [a#]

The features can be subsumed within the kāyas forms, speech,
 mind, qualities, and activity.

In summarizing these distinctive features, the *Heart Essence of Secrets* states:

The great perfection of the kāyas forms, speech, and mind:
 the perfection in all ways of the qualities and activity of
 enlightenment.¹⁰¹⁸

As this passage indicates, the distinctive features of the fruition aspect of tantra can be subsumed within five categories: There is enlightened form since there is what serves as the basis for all the magnificent qualities of the fruition without exception; enlightened speech since there is effective communication to those who are to be guided; enlightened mind since there is knowledge of all that can be known; qualities of enlightenment since there is perfection of control; and enlightened activity since those to be guided are guided.

Extremely Concise Enumeration [b#]

As for the second version, there is both a brief presentation and a more extensive explanation.

Brief Presentation [i#]

Alternatively, there are the two categories of the kāyas and timeless awareness.

More Extensive Presentation [ii#]

This involves two considerations: the kāyas that support and the timeless awareness that is supported.

Kāyas [aa#]

The five kāyas are identical in their spontaneous presence, yet manifest as though distinct.

The five kāyas are as follows:

- (1) dharmakāya, since enlightened intent free of obscuration proves to be the primordial unity of basic space and timeless awareness;
- (2) sambhogakāya, since that unity manifests (to the vast retinues of those who are spiritually mature) as being endowed with fivefold certainty;
- (3) nirmāṇakāya, since it manifests to the vast retinues of those who are spiritually motivated;
- (4) abhisambodhikāya, from the perspective of the foregoing three dimensions being distinct in their manifestation; and
- (5) vajrakāya, from the perspective of their being indivisible.

One might ask, “Are these identical or distinct from one another?” While the five kāyas are identical in essence as expressions of spontaneous presence, [4.219.a] they are distinct in the sense that this reality manifests as five kāyas from the standpoint of the specific qualities of enlightenment; this similar to the moon in the sky and its reflections in water.

The abhisambodhikāya and vajrakāya are kāyas in the purely nominal sense, for they are merely assigned from the standpoint of certain attri-

butes; it is definite that there are three kāyas in the true sense of the term. Of these three, one should understand that dharmakāya is assigned on the basis of the enlightened intent that is for one's own benefit, while the two rūpakāyas are assigned on the basis of the deeds that are for the benefit of others.

Timeless Awareness [bb#]

The five supported aspects of timeless awareness are the transmuted analogues of the basis of experience as the true ground and as true linkage, the afflictive aspect of consciousness, conceptual mind, and the five sensory avenues.

Once one has realized the nature of being that is already free of all limitless adventitious obscurations without these having to be eliminated, there is the full experience of the basis of experience that is the true ground of being;¹⁰¹⁹ this is timeless awareness as the basic space of phenomena. At that point, the transmuted analogue of the basis of ordinary experience as true linkage¹⁰²⁰ is a lucid yet nonconceptual state that serves as the basis for the remaining three aspects of timeless awareness; this is mirrorlike timeless awareness. The transmuted analogue of the afflictive aspect of consciousness is the absence of any value judgment, any division into better or worse; this is timeless awareness as equalness. The transmuted analogue of conceptual mind is knowledge of all that can be known throughout the three times, as clear and distinct as the petals of a lotus; this is discerning timeless awareness. The transmuted analogue of the five sensory avenues is the unhindered quality of the enactment of deeds that benefit beings; this is timeless awareness as ensured fulfillment. The *Detailed Array* states:

Timeless awareness as emptiness¹⁰²¹ is insubstantial;
mirrorlike timeless awareness is nonconceptual;
timeless awareness as equalness has no division into better or worse;
all-discerning timeless awareness is unconfused and lucid;
the constancy of ensured fulfillment is the consummation.¹⁰²²

Inseparability [bb]

Concerning the essence of these features as one of spontaneous presence:

Because the twenty-five factors entailed in the fruition can be summarized as the qualities of the “sixth,”
they are inseparable in their very essence of spontaneous presence.

These twenty-five factors entailed in the fruition state, moreover, arise as various aspects of the qualities of the “sixth victorious one” (that is, the totality of the five kāyas) and can be summarized as the qualities of that totality. [4.219.b] Therefore, they are inseparable in their very essence of spontaneous presence and epitomize a freedom beyond being one thing or many. The *United Intent* states:

There is equalness with buddhas and freedom within basic space.
There is spontaneous presence in supreme suchness.¹⁰²³

And the *Three Stages* states:

Since the qualities of the fruition state are spontaneously present,
they manifest like the wish-fulfilling gem.¹⁰²⁴

Benefit for Others [2]

As for the deeds that benefit others:

One perceives in three ways that involve nonconceptual, yet
naturally lucid perception.

Innate compassion is aroused as an ever-present flow, as a natural
force,

as an invoked presence, and in response to an object.

Like a gem, this acts to ensure spontaneously present benefit for
beings.

Once one's own benefit has been accomplished as just described, there comes benefit for others. As to the way in which one perceives those to

be guided with innate compassion, in this tradition no denial is made (“Timeless awareness can be interrupted”), nor any exaggeration (“Timeless awareness is an uninterrupted entity”). Rather, the very essence of being itself is free of the limitations of either of these two extremes and is the mode that accounts for perception taking place in a naturally lucid, yet nonconceptual, manner. The tantra states:

Emptiness, while having no identity, is timeless knowing, the
enlightened mind of self-knowing awareness,
a masterful state of mindfulness without anything to be focused on
or anything to focus.¹⁰²⁵

According to Lord Dropukpa’s interpretation,¹⁰²⁶ there are, in fact, three modes of perception. He describes these three as follows: (1) the mode of perception that is none other than basic space, also termed “timeless awareness of the actual nature of things, just as it is”; (2) the mode of perception that is none other than timeless awareness, also termed “timeless awareness of things in all their multiplicity”; (3) the mode of perception that is the inseparability of basic space and timeless awareness, also termed “timeless awareness that is aware within the inseparable union of the actual nature of things and things in all their multiplicity.”

As for the ways in which innate compassion is aroused once such perception has taken place, the *Three Stages* describes four:

It manifests in that it occurs as an ever-present flow, a natural force,
an invoked presence, or in response to an object.¹⁰²⁷

Innate compassion as an ever-present flow is comparable to the flow of a river; innate compassion as a natural force is comparable to the sun and its rays; [4.220.a] innate compassion as a presence that is invoked through prayer is comparable to a compassionate person’s reaction when approached by a beggar; and innate compassion in response to an object is comparable to a wise person’s reaction upon seeing someone committing a wrongful action.

Once innate compassion has been aroused in these four ways, the way in which deeds are then enacted to benefit beings is comparable to the function of a precious wish-fulfilling gem. To use this analogy, when one polishes such a precious gem and shows it honor, one’s wants and needs

are satisfied to the degree that one's personal merit allows, although the gem has no concepts, makes no effort, and is not partial or prejudiced. The consummate enlightened intent of victorious ones is similarly free of the limitations of ordinary existence and nonexistence, and therefore constitutes the dimension of the very essence of being, free of being naïvely affirmed or denied, which manifests in myriad ways, in harmony with the minds of those to be guided, acting in a nonconceptual and spontaneously present way that ensures uninterrupted benefit for beings.

Buddhahood in the Sūtras and Tantras [3]

The third consideration, an auxiliary discussion of the distinctions between the interpretations of buddhahood, is threefold, concerning dharmakāya, sambhogakāya, and nirmāṇakāya.

Dharmakāya [a]

Dharmakāya involves three topics: essence, characteristics, and blessing.

In order for one to develop a more precise comprehension of the distinctions between the cause-based approach and the fruition-based approach, the following points are to be examined concerning the distinctions between the interpretations of buddhahood that are to be found in the explanations according to the sūtra and tantra traditions. As for dharmakāya, these distinctions are threefold: its essence; its characteristics; and its blessing.

As to the first of these distinctions, the interpretation of dharmakāya in the dialectical approach is that it constitutes emptiness free of elaboration; this is compared to space. As the *Entrance into the Middle Way* states:

Once the dry tinder of all that is knowable, without exception,
has been burnt up, that peace is the dharmakāya of the victorious
ones.

At that point, there is no origin and no cessation.

The kāyas ensure that the cessation of ordinary mind is fully
evident.¹⁰²⁸

The interpretation of dharmakāya in the tantric tradition is that it constitutes what is the nature of basic space and timeless awareness, emptiness and manifestation in primordial unity. As the extensive version of the tantra the *Web of Magical Display* states:

The things of the animate and inanimate world,
even in manifesting, do not exist as substantial entities.¹⁰²⁹
[4.220.b]

As to the second of these distinctions, the interpretation of dharmakāya in the dialectical approach tends toward the extreme of emptiness, but the interpretation of dharmakāya in the tantric tradition does not tend toward the extreme of either naïve affirmation or nihilistic denial since it is held to constitute the nondual unity of manifestation and emptiness.

As to the third of these distinctions, the interpretation of dharmakāya in the dialectical approach is that no blessings other than those of the two rūpakāyas proceed from it, but the interpretation of dharmakāya in the tantric tradition is that from the blessing of basic space and timeless awareness (that is, emptiness and manifestation) in primordial unity come all manner of developments, such as the five kāyas.

Sambhogakāya [b]

**Sambhogakāya involves what can be experienced and the means
for experiencing it.**

As for sambhogakāya, these distinctions are twofold. Concerning the distinctions regarding what can be experienced, the interpretation of sambhogakāya in the dialectical approach is that while it can experience all that is positive, it cannot experience what is negative. The interpretation of sambhogakāya in the tantric tradition, however, is that it can experience both.

Concerning the distinctions regarding the means that allow such experience, the interpretation of the dialectical approach is that there are no means for there to be experience of what is negative, but the interpretation in the tantric tradition, however, is that there are means for both positive and negative to be experienced.

Nirmāṇakāya [c]

Nirmāṇakāya involves those to be guided and the means to guide. Gyalwa Yungtön analyzed the distinctions between the dialectical and tantric interpretations.

As for nirmāṇakāya, these distinctions are twofold. Concerning the distinctions regarding those to be guided, the interpretation of nirmāṇakāya in the dialectical approach is that while it can guide those whose character is positive, it cannot guide those whose character is negative. The interpretation of nirmāṇakāya in the tantric tradition, however, is that it entertains no bias concerning those to be guided.

Concerning the distinctions regarding the means of guiding, the interpretation of nirmāṇakāya in the cause-based dialectical approach is that there are no means to guide those whose character is negative, but the interpretation of nirmāṇakāya in the tantric tradition, however, is that it possesses the means to guide both those whose character is positive and those whose character is negative.

The foregoing distinctions between the dialectical and the tantric traditions were discussed by the great Gyalwa Yungtön¹⁰³⁰ in his analyses, which were famed as being held in high esteem by his learned contemporaries. [4.221.a]

Furthermore, dharmakāya is distinguished by utterly unchanging and supreme bliss. Sambhogakāya, endowed with fivefold certainty, is such that its pure realms and teachers and retinues are not subsumed within the realm of externals, but rather are all awareness's own natural manifestations, spontaneously present within the supreme state of utter lucidity that is the ground of being. With the gaining of mastery, through the four modes of guiding,¹⁰³¹ over any and every aspect of the entire range of the four kinds of enlightened activity, nirmāṇakāya entails command over the deeds that benefit those to be guided.¹⁰³² As well, the following distinction applies to sambhogakāya and nirmāṇakāya: in the interpretation of the dialectical approach, these two rūpakāyas are held to be produced by causes and conditions, while in the interpretation of the tantric tradition, the rūpakāyas are not produced by causes and conditions. For example, the extensive version of the tantra states:

... because they do not rely on causes and conditions, ...¹⁰³³

There are other distinctions discussed by the great learned and accomplished masters of the Early Translation School.

Gaining Freedom according to the Vajra Heart Essence of Utter Lucidity [II]

The second major explanation, that of the three-stage process of gaining freedom according to the tradition of the vajra heart essence of utter lucidity, has two parts: an explanation of the way in which freedom takes place according to the levels of acumen, and a definitive conclusion concerning the nature of the ultimate level of supreme freedom.

Levels of Acumen [A]

This explanation has two parts: a brief introduction to provide continuity, and a more extensive explanation of what that signifies.

Overview [1]

According to the “vajra pinnacle,” there are specific degrees of acumen.

In the tradition of the vajra pinnacle (that is, the Great Perfection approach of utter lucidity), distinct modes of freedom are described, according to some twenty-one levels of acumen. The twenty-one levels are as discussed in the following passage from the great tantra *Naturally Arising Awareness*:

Acumen is taught to be of three kinds: higher, middling, and lesser. The higher kind has seven levels: the lesser degree of the higher, the middling degree of the higher, the higher degree of the higher, the excellent degree of the higher, the sublime degree of the higher, the pinnacle degree of the higher, and the ultimate consummation of the higher. Such are the divisions of the higher kind of acumen. On each of these levels, furthermore, one experiences a specific way in which perception takes place, a specific way in which the scope of timeless awareness unfolds,¹⁰³⁴ [4.221.b] a specific measure of the

realization involved, a specific way in which visions unfold, a specific occasion for understanding,¹⁰³⁵ and a specific way in which awareness views reality.¹⁰³⁶ One thus gains stability in the experiences of each specific level.

The middling kind also has seven levels: the lesser degree of the middling, the middling degree of the middling, the higher degree of the middling, the excellent degree of the middling, the sublime degree of the middling, the pinnacle degree of the middling, and the ultimate consummation of the middling. Such are the divisions of the middling kind.¹⁰³⁷

The lesser kind also has seven levels: the lesser degree of the lesser, the middling degree of the lesser, the higher degree of the lesser, the sublime degree of the lesser, the excellent degree of the lesser,¹⁰³⁸ the pinnacle degree of the lesser, and the attainment of the summit of the lesser.¹⁰³⁹

Extensive Explanation [2]

This explanation involves three considerations: the modes of freedom for those of lesser, middling, and higher acumen.

Lesser Acumen [a]

For those of lesser acumen, there is a tendency that carries over into the intermediate state of becoming, from which they are inspired to attain naturally occurring *nirmāṇakāya* pure realms.

Those of the lowest degree of lesser acumen have very little diligence, and so even though they may gain a glimpse of the doorway to the direct experience of reality, their practice is one of establishing predilections; they lack the indwelling confidence born from some measure of freedom. Although they experience the intermediate state of the actual nature of phenomena, they do not recognize its significance, and so experience the intermediate state of becoming as simply the confusing images of a dreamlike state.¹⁰⁴⁰ Due to the blessing of truth (which is to say, the actual nature of phenomena), their karmic tendencies have carried over to this point, and they are born into naturally occurring *nirmāṇakāya* pure realms, such as *Abhirati*.¹⁰⁴¹ There they see the faces of *tathāgatas*, hear

their teachings, receive empowerments and spiritual transmissions, and so are inspired. They become completely free of all the bonds of afflictive states and awaken to enlightenment on the primordial level of freedom. *Naturally Arising Awareness* states:

For ordinary beings who have perceived the truth
(even though true realization may not have awakened in them),
final freedom is gained by abiding in *nirmāṇakāya* pure realms
throughout the ten directions.¹⁰⁴²

And from the same source: [4.222.a]

For those with the lowest degree of the lower kind of acumen,
having abided for twenty-one days,¹⁰⁴³ they then encounter a
process involving spontaneously present visions (specifically,
a process involving the impure avenue of samsaric experience)
and abide in *nirmāṇakāya* pure realms throughout the ten di-
rections. There, without any further intermediate state, they
awaken to buddhahood in the true sense of the term.¹⁰⁴⁴

These pure realms manifest in ways that resemble those of naturally occurring *sambhogakāya* pure realms. One perceives oneself in the center, surrounded in the four cardinal directions by peaceful forms, with a wrathful realm directly above and in front of one. All this arises naturally through the blessings of Samantabhadra Vajradhara. Among these realms, one is born into whichever one accords with one's spiritual potential and aspirations. There one is brought to spiritual maturity, so that when one beholds the universe arrayed in the space in front of one as a wrathful realm, the blessing of this experience completely refines away cognitive obscurations; one awakens to manifest enlightenment on the level of original purity.

Middling Acumen [b]

For those of middling acumen, there is a fourfold dissolution
process in the intermediate state of the actual nature of
phenomena.

When eight modes of arising, states of recollection, levels of
deeper discernment,

powers of complete recall, and states of meditative absorption
 ensue,
 freedom is gained through eight modes of dissolution, in accord
 with twenty levels of acumen.

Those whose acumen and diligence are of a middling kind, but who still have not gained the primordial level of freedom in this lifetime, experience the intermediate state of the actual nature of phenomena through a fourfold process of dissolution. When eight modes of arising, six states of recollection, levels of deeper discernment, powers of complete recall, and states of meditative absorption ensue, they recall spiritual instructions that concern the three modes. Of the twenty-one levels of acumen, theirs are the remaining twenty,¹⁰⁴⁵ and in accord with their respective levels, they experience a progression of “days” of meditative stability and gain freedom through eight modes of dissolution, thus reaching the ultimate goal.

As for this fourfold process of dissolution: (1) initially, as space dissolves into utter lucidity,¹⁰⁴⁶ one experiences the utterly lucid vision of the actual nature of phenomena, radiating the five colors of the light of timeless awareness; [4.222.b] (2) as utter lucidity dissolves into primordial unity, pure awareness suffuses light and light suffuses pure awareness; (3) as primordial unity dissolves into timeless awareness, one gains freedom from fixation on the seeming self associated with the mind-body aggregates, the physical obstruction of the elements, and afflictive states (both obvious and subtle), and the visions of fourfold timeless awareness¹⁰⁴⁷ arise; (4) as timeless awareness dissolves into spontaneous presence, the visions of timeless awareness are resolved within their true nature, and all the experiences of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa arise as eight modes of arising. The *Conjunction of Sun and Moon* states:

Then one’s consciousness dissolves into the light above one,
 and one experiences the eight modes of arising. At that point,
 one perceives the visions of wrathful sambhogakāya deities
 below one.

One might ask, “What are these eight modes of arising?”

There is arising as innate compassion, and so saṃsāra and
 nirvāṇa are not divorced from one another.

There is arising as light, and so all manifest appearances are expressions of one's inner experience of lucidity.

There is arising as enlightened embodiment, and so one does not become lost in externalizing the objects of one's knowledge.

There is arising as timeless awareness, and so all manifest appearances are experienced as unobstructed.

There is arising as nonduality, and so one's consciousness abides one-pointedly.

There is arising as a freedom from extremes, and so one is not caught in any extreme whatsoever.

There is the arising of manifest appearances as the impure avenue of saṃsāra, and so the source of conditioned existence is not blocked off.

And there is the arising of appearances as the pure avenue of timeless awareness, and so one is connected with the actual nature of phenomena.¹⁰⁴⁸

It is at that point that one should recall the sublime skillful means that allow for no turning back, like an arrow shot from the bow of a champion archer.¹⁰⁴⁹

While these visions are taking place, some fourteen qualities come into play, among which are the six states of recollection. The source just cited states:

At that point, the six states of recollection also arise.

There is recollection of the deity, and so at that very moment one beholds the presence of one's chosen deity.

There is recollection of the spiritual path, and so one gains the mastery to experience the actual nature of phenomena in the intermediate state after death.

There is recollection of alternative states of rebirth, and so those of lesser acumen are inspired to attain naturally occurring nirmāṇakāya pure realms.

There is recollection of states of meditative stability, and so one abides for five "days" in meditative stability. [4.223.a]

There is recollection of the pith instructions of one's gurus,

and so one can appreciate one's perceptions of apparent phenomena in a state of nonduality.

And there is recollection of the view, and so there is recognition, as though one were simply encountering a person one already knew from before.¹⁰⁵⁰

As for the six levels of deeper discernment, the same source states:

Once the foregoing has arisen, a child of spiritual heritage experiences the six levels of deeper discernment.¹⁰⁵¹

This statement means that one experiences six degrees of each of six levels of deeper discernment: one's sense faculties and one's mind become pliable, one's sublime intelligence gains in power, one experiences the completely pure perception of timeless awareness, one unerringly perceives the actual nature of phenomena, and one unerringly perceives the sublime intelligence of the buddhas. It is said that if these states are analyzed in further detail, there are some 134.

As for the powers of complete recall, the same source states:

At that point the powers of complete recall also awaken in one's stream of awareness. All phenomena from one's past arise simultaneously in one's experience. Similarly, since phenomena that one has never before perceived also arise, this is termed "the intermediate state of the actual nature of phenomena."¹⁰⁵²

As for the ongoing states of meditative absorption, moreover, the same source states:

Ongoing states of meditative absorption arise naturally in one's stream of awareness, and so negative thoughts never occur.¹⁰⁵³

There are three pith instructions concerning the key point of the state of freedom:

(1) the advice for recognizing the visions of the actual nature of phenomena to be awareness's own natural manifestations (the analogy is that of a child climbing into its mother's lap¹⁰⁵⁴);

(2) subsequent to the foregoing recognition, the spiritual instruction on not straying for a single instant from a natural state of meditative sta-

bility in the immediacy of one's experience (the analogy is that of using a golden probe¹⁰⁵⁵);

(3) the pith instruction on never turning back once one has gained freedom in original purity, which is one's natural state in the immediacy of abiding in meditative stability (the analogy is that of an arrow shot from a champion archer's bow).

By recalling these instructions, those whose acumen is the ultimate consummation of the higher kind gain freedom in three instants; those whose acumen is the pinnacle degree of the higher kind, in a single "day"; [4.223.b] those whose acumen is the middling degree of the lesser kind, in nineteen "days." Having gained freedom, they send forth emanations, until finally the visions of spontaneous presence resolve within the inner basic space of original purity, like the rays shining from a crystal drawing back into it.¹⁰⁵⁶ This is a process of eight modes of dissolution. *Naturally Arising Awareness* states:

Ah, friends! When one's true nature becomes the predominant factor in the visions of spontaneous presence, and one directly perceives the truth, one should recognize the eight modes of dissolution.

Innate compassion dissolves into innate compassion; this is analogous to the sun's rays resolving back into it as it sets.¹⁰⁵⁷

Timeless awareness dissolves into timeless awareness; this is analogous to a child's climbing into its mother's lap.

Light dissolves into light; this is analogous to a rainbow's fading in the sky.

Enlightened embodiment dissolves into enlightened embodiment; this is analogous to the body of a vase.¹⁰⁵⁸

Nonduality dissolves into nonduality; this is analogous to one river's flowing into another.

Freedom from extremes dissolves into freedom from extremes; this is analogous to space's blending with space.

The pure avenue of timeless awareness dissolves into original purity; this is analogous to a snow lion's taking a glacier as its territory.

The impure avenue dissolves into the pure avenue of timeless awareness; this is analogous to releasing the guy cord to collapse a tent.¹⁰⁵⁹

Higher Acumen [c]

For those of higher acumen, there is disintegration on the level of primordial resolution,
 like the passing of a ḍākinī, like the passing of a master of awareness, like a roaring fire, like space.
 All these cases, however, are identical within the precious and secret embrace.

Those whose acumen, personal lot, and diligence are the ultimate consummation of the higher kind reach the primordial ground of freedom in this very lifetime.

As an indication of this, in certain cases their physical bodies are dispersed into subatomic particles, and so the physical aggregates disintegrate. This is comparable to what occurs when a ḍākinī passes away, leaving no remains that anyone can see. It is an indication that one has awakened to buddhahood without any intermediate state occurring after death.

In other cases, in order to bring others to the teachings, a sublime yogic practitioner may pass away as a mass of light in the sky, which everyone can see and which emits sounds and rays of light. [4.224.a] This is comparable to cases in which masters of awareness have ascended bodily, as everyone sees them going higher and higher up into space, accompanied by sounds and rays of light. It is an indication that such a practitioner can bring benefit to beings through an inconceivable number of emanations in an inconceivable number of worlds.

As to the way in which yogic practitioners whose spiritual practice is consummate die, it is comparable to the way in which huge roaring fires die out quite naturally when the firewood that is the causal factor is exhausted. In an analogous way, for these yogic practitioners the “fuel” that has been exhausted is that of the elements (which are the causal factors), and so the mind-body aggregates (which are the conditioning factors) have ceased to be experienced as substantial entities. This is an indication that the afflictive states have been freed into their natural state.

There are other cases in which yogic practitioners experience an atemporal merging with the level of original purity when their physical body disintegrates into subatomic particles, like a vase being shattered: this is the “spacelike” way of dying. The sensation of having a physical body creates an impression comparable to that of a clay vase with space trapped

inside it. One's realization of original purity is focused in the heart center of utter lucidity within that body. When a clay vase is shattered, the space outside the vase and the space inside it merge, so that one can no longer distinguish between them. In an analogous way, one awakens to buddhahood without any further distinction of "this is the physical body that was reduced to subatomic particles" versus "this is the pure awareness that was within that body." This is an indication that one has gained freedom without obstruction on the level of original purity.

The foregoing alternatives pertain to one reaching the final goal of a secret path of practice: that of *trekchö*, or "cutting through seeming solidity,"¹⁰⁶⁰ in the first and last cases, and that of *tögal*, or "surpassing the pinnacle,"¹⁰⁶¹ in the middle two cases. Through the practice of cutting through seeming solidity, one's physical body is dispersed into subatomic particles, while one's mind is dispersed into its true nature, and one gains freedom on the level of original purity. Through the practice of surpassing the pinnacle, the specific distinction is that while one's body is dispersed into subatomic particles, it is rendered lucid as a form of light, giving one control over birth and further involvement; reemerging into the enlightened embodiment of "supreme transference,"¹⁰⁶² one continues to act for the sake of beings.

In such cases as the foregoing, one has transcended view and meditation, so that spiritual teachings no longer have any effect, positive or negative, and one experiences awareness's own natural manifestations as originally pure and spontaneously present, and the level of freedom is experienced as an innate attribute. [4.224.b] This is because freedom is gained through spontaneous presence resolving into the expanse of original purity.

Although the foregoing entail distinct levels of acumen (due to the various ways in which one trains on the spiritual path), the results are essentially the identical fruition, that of the secret embrace of precious dharmakāya that is endowed with twofold purity. This is analogous to the space inside various containers being subsumed within the same realm of space, or different rivers merging as one in the same ocean.

Supreme Freedom [B]

The explanation of a definitive conclusion concerning the nature of the ultimate level of supreme freedom has three parts: a discussion of the vast scope of manifest enlightenment; a discussion of one's pure awareness

as what by nature is timeless awareness itself; and an elucidation of the essential significance of the foregoing discussions.

Manifest Enlightenment [1]

In the first place, there are seven considerations concerning enlightenment: what the kāyas constitute in essence; the derivation of their terminology; their characteristics; their natures; their mode of abiding; their pure realms; those to be guided by them; their functions; their constancy; and a detailed analysis of them.

Essence [a]

The kāyas and timeless awareness are inseparable: the three kāyas of enlightenment, in essence, constitute original purity, spontaneous presence, and the occurrence of whatever serves to guide beings.

At whatever point one experiences pure awareness entirely free of all adventitious distortions, dharmakāya, completely pure by nature, becomes fully evident. One awakens to manifest enlightenment within the basic space that is the inseparability of the kāyas and timeless awareness and manifests in worlds throughout the furthest reaches of the ten directions, as though a whole array of lamps were being lit; that is, without straying from dharmakāya, sambhogakāya and nirmāṇakāya manifestations, together with the enlightened activities they entail, ensure that the two kinds of benefit¹⁰⁶³ are spontaneously accomplished. This is the consummate fruition in this approach.

The three kāyas are, in essence, as follows: they serve as “embodiments,” or underlying bases, for the qualities of buddhahood. Dharmakāya, in essence, is supreme original purity since it is free of being anything that could be imagined or verbalized. Sambhogakāya, in essence, is supreme spontaneous presence since it is natural lucidity free of any limiting conceptual framework. Nirmāṇakāya, in essence, is the occurrence of whatever serves to guide beings in any way necessary since it is the aspect that is the basis for the expression of innate compassion.

Derivation of Terminology [b]

The derivation of terms for these is that they signify the unity of emptiness and lucidity, perfection of what is clearly evident, and harmonious manifestation. [4.225.a]

As for the derivation that accounts for the significance of the terminology employed:

(1) “dharma” signifies the unity of emptiness and lucidity, beyond ordinary characterization yet endowed with twofold purity, and “kāya” signifies that this undergoes no transition or change;

(2) “bhoga” signifies the major and minor marks of perfection, “sam-” signifies the perfection of these, and “kāya” signifies that these are apparent yet without any independent nature of their own;

(3) “nirmāṇa” signifies manifestation in myriad emanated forms that serve to guide in any way possible, and “kāya” signifies that benefit is ensured in harmony with those thus served.

Characteristics [c]

Their characteristics are those of being beyond imagining, lucid yet involving no concepts, and revealing a myriad array.

As for the characteristics of enlightenment, generally speaking they can be characterized as that which abides as the embodiment of buddhahood, the supportive ground of being that is endowed with twofold purity. Concerning what characterizes the kāyas in particular, as the *Perfect Dynamic Energy of the Lion* states:

Dharmakāya is characterized as beyond imagining.

Sambhogakāya is characterized as lucid yet involving no concepts.

Nirmāṇakāya is characterized as revealing a myriad array.¹⁰⁶⁴

Nature [d]

Their natures are those of emptiness, lucidity, and unceasing overt manifestation.

As for the natures of the three kāyas, they constitute, respectively:

- (1) emptiness, that is, original purity free of all elaboration;
- (2) natural lucidity, that is, spontaneous presence in which the manifestations of basic space are innately perfect; and
- (3) the unceasing overt manifestation of knowledge and awareness.

Mode of Abiding [e]

The mode of their abiding is comparable to that of space, a rainbow, and an illusion.

Their three modes of abiding are as follows:

- (1) dharmakāya abides as a freedom from ordinary characterization; in this, it is comparable to space;
- (2) sambhogakāya abides as a freedom from corporeality; in this, it is comparable to a rainbow; and
- (3) nirmāṇakāya abides as an indeterminate myriad array; in this, it is comparable to an illusory display.

Pure Realms [f]

Their pure realms are those of original purity, timeless awareness, and the manifestation of animate and inanimate universes.

Of the three kinds of pure realms, the pure realm of dharmakāya is original purity, which transcends the ordinary mind's power to imagine. The pure realms of sambhogakāya are those of the five kāyas, clearly evident as aspects of timeless awareness. The pure realms of nirmāṇakāya constitute the infinite manifestation of the animate and inanimate universes for the myriad beings to be guided. [4.225.b]

Those to Be Guided [g]

Those to be guided are those of complete purity, those who are awareness's own natural manifestations, and the six classes of ordinary beings.

All of these situations, furthermore, are endowed with fivefold excellence.

As for those to be guided, those whose experience is one of complete and innate purity are those to be guided by dharmakāya, for their pure awareness is beyond vacillation or effort. Those to be guided by sambhogakāya are the hosts of those in the center and retinue who are awareness's own natural manifestations. Those to be guided by nirmāṇakāya are the ordinary beings in their natural abodes within the six classes.

All of these situations, furthermore, involve what by nature constitutes fivefold excellence. The *Heaped Jewels* states:

Due to dharmakāya, the innate purity underlying all ordinary reifying perceptions,
the teachings that involve no conceptual elaboration,
which emerge from enlightened mind, and the natural resolution
that cannot be confined to specific limits
are communicated through speech that involves no ordinary characteristics,
within the immeasurable mansion of unelaborated innate purity,
to the retinue that manifests as inseparable from being itself.
Without having been spoken, without being spoken,
these teachings are revealed within the supreme state of equalness.

Due to sambhogakāya, the pure state of innate lucidity,
the teachings that constitute purity that is not some substantial entity,
which emerge from enlightened mind,
endowed with the five aspects of timeless awareness,
are communicated through speech that is supreme,
unelaborate bliss within the immeasurable mansion of completely pure light of five colors,
to the retinue of the family types of the five kāyas.
Completely pure rays of light spread forth from the tongue that reveals these teachings, unspoken,
in a supreme and naturally occurring state as six naturally occurring syllables.

Due to nirmāṇakāya, which involves no obsessive fixations,
all the teachings that are appropriate to any being's level of acumen,

which emerge from enlightened mind, the naturally lucid state of recall,
 are communicated through speech that involves the elaboration of language within the environments of the spiritual teachings, the specific realms of those to be guided, to those fortunate beings of the six classes whose karmic predispositions have been awakened. Teachings spread forth from the tongue that is not a physical organ, but that reveals these teachings as a succession of spiritual approaches.¹⁰⁶⁵

Function [h]

The function of the kāyas is that of not straying, being spontaneously present, and being like reflections of the moon in water.

As for the function, or enlightened activity expressed in deeds, once there is the perfection of one's own welfare (that is, dharmakāya), within that context, abiding without ever straying from basic space, the welfare of others arises as the rūpakāyas. [4.226.a] Leading ordinary beings on a path of spiritual evolution, these kāyas ensure that the two kinds of benefit are spontaneously accomplished for as long as saṃsāra endures; their spiritual miracles, like reflections of the moon on water, automatically manifest in a vast range of realms.

Constancy [i]

The measure of indwelling confidence lies in a freedom from elaboration, a natural lucidity, and the ensuring of two kinds of benefit.

As for the measure of indwelling confidence entailed in the kāyas, once the qualities of renunciation and realization have been brought to consummation, this process validates itself as the three kāyas of buddhahood; in an analogous way, when one's wants and needs are met, this validates the constancy of a wish-fulfilling gem.

The constancy of dharmakāya lies in an unwavering state free of freedom from elaboration; the constancy of sambhogakāya, in natural lucidity expressed in the major and minor marks of perfect form; and the constancy of nirmāṇakāya, in ensuring that two kinds of benefit are spontaneously accomplished. These constitute the perfection of all that is truly meaningful (without entailing any conceptual process) that abides spontaneously present within the basic space of dharmakāya, which is without transition or change.

Detailed Analysis [j]

This involves two considerations: a general overview of the three kāyas, and a detailed analysis of the nature of their distinct expressions.

Overview of the Three Kāyas [i]

To analyze them, the three kāyas each constitute a fivefold continuum of inexhaustible adornment, which means that, generally speaking, there are certainly fifteen categories of enlightened being.

As for this analysis, each of the three kāyas is analyzed into a fivefold continuum of the inexhaustible adornment of being, which means that, generally speaking, there are fifteen categories of enlightened being. As the source tantra, the *Reverberation of Sound*, states:

As for dharmakāya, it is enlightened form, speech, mind, qualities, and activity.

Enlightened form is by nature empty, clear, and beyond ordinary characterization.

Enlightened speech is free of terms, words, and labels and is inexpressible, beyond discussion.

Enlightened mind entails no thought or mental stirring and is beyond proliferating thoughts and analysis.

The qualities of enlightenment neither increase nor deteriorate.

They pervade basic space and timeless awareness and are by nature uncontrived.

Enlightened activity is nonoccurring, unborn, automatic, and unceasing,

is not caused to happen, and does not cause anything to happen.
[4.226.b]

For the sambhogakāya, as well, there are the five facets of form, speech, mind, qualities, and activity.

Enlightened form is apparent yet has no self-nature, and awareness permeates both what is illuminated and what illuminates.

Enlightened speech is naturally occurring, naturally manifest, an ongoing process of proliferation and resolution.

Enlightened mind is uninterrupted vision, the dynamic quality of sublime intelligence, and enlightened intent.

The qualities of enlightenment consist of the perfection of the major and minor marks, as well as the perfection of lucid enlightened intent and deeper levels of discernment.

Enlightened activities develop on outer, inner, and secret levels of the wheel of spiritual teachings:

To the buddhas of the specific family types, as well as to bodhisattvas, these facets proliferate from the buddhas' "naturally occurring tongues."

They reveal themselves to the retinue by virtue of their own essence.

Nirmāṇakāya, moreover, is fivefold:

enlightened form, speech, mind, qualities, and activity.

Enlightened form, with the major and marks of perfection, emanates in a body in whatever way necessary to guide those who are to be guided.

The words of enlightened speech are elegant, with sixty melodious qualities.

Enlightened mind abides as the enlightened intent to benefit both oneself and others and is timeless awareness of the knowable.

The qualities of enlightenment are the perfection of sublime intelligence.

Enlightened activity is the perfection of all deeds without exception,

on outer, inner, and secret levels.

These abide as fivefold excellence.¹⁰⁶⁶

Detailed Analysis of the Distinct Expressions of the Three Kāyas [ii]

As for the detailed analysis of the nature of their distinct expressions,

dharmakāya can be analyzed into aspects of dharmakāya, sambhogakāya, and nirmāṇakāya; as can the rest.

This gives nine categories, each with its pure realm, environment, meditative absorption, retinue, teaching, and occasion.

As for the analysis in detail of the nature of the distinct expressions of the kāyas, they can be analyzed into nine categories: the dharmakāya aspect of dharmakāya, the sambhogakāya aspect of dharmakāya, the nirmāṇakāya aspect of dharmakāya, and so on. Each of these nine can be further analyzed into six factors: the respective pure realm, environment, meditative absorption (that is, characteristic), retinue, teaching, and occasion. Let us consider each of these in turn.¹⁰⁶⁷

In the first place:

(1) For the dharmakāya aspect of dharmakāya, the pure realm is inconceivable to the ordinary mind. [4.227.a] The environment is the actual nature of phenomena, which transcends any context in which it could be imagined. The meditative absorption is the supreme state that never strays from that nature. The retinue is the myriad array that by nature is none other than dharmakāya. The teaching is the actual nature of phenomena, which is inexpressible. The occasion is that of the actual nature of phenomena, which is without any change whatsoever.

(2) For the sambhogakāya aspect of dharmakāya, the pure realm is immaculate, free of any flaw. The environment is that in which the ordinary mind's concepts have been eradicated. The meditative absorption is that in which ordinary mind and mental events are purified within basic space. The retinue is emptiness, which allows for the appearance of awareness's own natural manifestations. The teaching is that of the complete purity underlying any conceptual frame of reference. The occasion is that which cannot be imputed conceptually.

(3) For the nirmāṇakāya aspect of dharmakāya, the pure realm is emptiness, which is in no way restricted. The environment is that which serves as the ground from which everything arises. The meditative absorption

is that of innate lucidity within a supreme unceasing state. The retinue consists of buddhas indivisible from this aspect and the “host” of a vast range of expressions of timeless awareness. The teaching is the uncontrived nature of being. The occasion is the overt manifestation of the heart essence of being as enlightenment.

In the second place:

(4) The dharmakāya aspect of sambhogakāya is the form of Vairocana known as Himasāgara,¹⁰⁶⁸ whose presence manifests as transparent inwardly if viewed from without and transparent outwardly if viewed from within, who has no front or back, and whose face gazes panoramically in all ten directions. The pure realm is that of mastery over the twenty-one universes held in the palms of Vairocana’s hands, and the environment is the completely pure realm of Ghanavyūha. The retinue is such that it is none other than Vairocana. The teaching is the innate manifestation of naturally occurring awareness. The occasion is that of realization becoming fully evident.

(5) The sambhogakāya aspect of sambhogakāya is the principal buddhas of the specific family types, whose attributes are such that they have distinctions that are separate from their essence, yet are identical in nature.¹⁰⁶⁹ The pure realms are the innumerable maṇḍalas of the specific families. The environment is Akaniṣṭha, the pinnacle pure realm. The retinues consist of the five families of the respective buddhas. The teaching is that of appreciating the richness of the five aspects of timeless awareness as qualities of knowing. The occasion is that of manifest appearances forming and evolving. [4.227.b]

(6) The nirmāṇakāya aspects of sambhogakāya are the five principal buddhas of the specific families and their retinues. Their attributes are such that they are apparent yet have no independent nature, that is, they are clearly evident, yet entail no concepts. The pure realms of these aspect are enjoyed by countless hundreds of thousands of gods and goddesses. The environment is the realm of Alakavati, the spontaneous presence of the five aspects of timeless awareness. The retinues consists of countless buddhas and bodhisattvas. The occasion is that of awareness’s own manifestations becoming apparent.¹⁰⁷⁰

In the third place:

(7) The dharmakāya aspect of nirmāṇakāya is the glorious and supreme Vajradhara, whose attributes constitute the commitment to manifest in physical form through any of the four modes of rebirth¹⁰⁷¹ and to complete the thirty-six deeds of enlightened beings.¹⁰⁷² The pure realm is a

Mahābrahma realm,¹⁰⁷³ consisting of billions of three-thousandfold universes surrounding Vajradhara. The environment is Metok Pema Khatong Denpa [Endowed with a Thousand Lotuses]. The retinue consists of beings born through any of the four modes of rebirth. The teaching is the *Reverberation of Sound*, the source of all categories of the teachings. The occasion is the time when people live for countless years.

(8) The sambhogakāya aspect of nirmāṇakāya is the glorious Vajrasattva. The pure realm is that of a billion three-thousandfold universes. The environment is in harmony with the perceptions of those to be guided. The retinue consists of bodhisattvas on the eight level of realization. The teaching is the spiritual approach that concerns the definitive meaning of the teachings. The occasion is unpredictable.

(9) The nirmāṇakāya aspect of nirmāṇakāya was Śākyamuni, whose attributes consisted of engaging in the twelve great deeds, such as leaving home to become a homeless renunciate. The realm over which this aspect held sway was that of a single greater order universe, a three-thousandfold universe of long-endured suffering, consisting of a billion worlds such as our own human realm and more. The environment included such places as Vulture Peak.¹⁰⁷⁴ The ordinary retinue consisted of four groups: fully ordained monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen; the extraordinary retinue was varied, consisting of indescribably countless numbers of great bodhisattvas; [4.228.a] the inconsistent retinue consisted of countless numbers of gods, humans, demigods, and other beings. The teaching consisted of a variety of spiritual approaches, oriented toward both causes and results. The occasions were opportunities to eradicate doubt with total certainty, which is to say, occasions to ensure benefit for individual beings to be guided.

Nature of Timeless Awareness [2]

The explanation of one's pure awareness as what by nature is timeless awareness itself has three parts: its essence; the derivation of the term; and a detailed analysis.

Essence [a]

Timeless awareness abides as the heart essence of being, which is a primordial quality of knowing.

Timeless awareness, in essence, is pure awareness, comparable to the sun, that abides primordially as a quality of knowing awareness, free of the “clouds” of adventitious obscurations, so that its enlightened intent, a flawless state of sublime intelligence, abides as the heart essence of the kāyas.

Derivation of the Term [b]

It is *timelessly* lucid, and *awareness* that is direct due to realization.

As for the derivation of the term, this spontaneously present aspect of being, lucid as knowing awareness in a way that is “timeless” (*ye (nas)*), is “awareness” (*shes (pa)*) as direct perception due to realization, and so is naturally free of all obscuration. It fully expresses itself as the maṇḍala of all the qualities of enlightenment without exception, abiding innately as the blissful expanse within which the kāyas and timeless awareness constitute a unity beyond ordinary union or separation.

Detailed Analysis [c]

The third explanation is threefold, concerning the timeless awareness as dharmakāya, sambhogakāya, and nirmāṇakāya.

Timeless Awareness as Dharmakāya [i]

Dharmakāya abides as the ground of being, comparable to the sun, serving as the ground from which everything arises.

Timeless awareness is threefold, abiding in its natural resting place of profound lucidity.

Timeless awareness as dharmakāya, abiding as the ground of being, is comparable to the orb of the sun (or a globe of crystal), resting in its natural place, in abiding as the ground from which everything arises, that is, the unity of emptiness and lucidity. Timeless awareness as both sambhogakāya and nirmāṇakāya is comparable to the sun’s rays in serving as the ground from which everything arises.

There is, moreover, the expression “timeless awareness abiding as threefold.” Timeless awareness as the originally pure essence of being, beyond

the limitations of conceptual elaboration and description, is comparable to a transparent globe of crystal. Timeless awareness as the spontaneously present nature of being is the ground from which arise the qualities of enlightenment that are its manifest aspects; other than simply constituting the most subtle state of profound lucidity, [4.228.b] it does not exist as some substantial thing distinct from anything else. Timeless awareness as the all-pervasive responsiveness of being¹⁰⁷⁵ is unceasing as the ground from which everything arises due to the dynamic energy of the essence of being; it abides as the simple aspect of awareness that is not yet actually engaging in specific objects of consciousness.

If timeless awareness existed in dharmakāya in some more obvious way, this would mean that it was substantial and could be characterized in ordinary ways, and so it would not follow that it could be characterized as peace free of such elaboration. But if timeless awareness were not present as that aspect of profound lucidity that serves as the ground from which everything arises, this would mean that there was an inert void, like blank space. Instead, as an alternative to both of these extremes, there is what is termed “subtle timeless awareness, profoundly lucid, abiding in its natural place of rest as the ground from which everything arises.”

Timeless Awareness as Sambhogakāya [ii]

**Sambhogakāya, in exhibiting attributes, presents reflected forms.
From an analysis of five aspects of timeless awareness come
twenty-five.**

Due to sambhogakāya (that is, timeless awareness as it exhibits attributes), there is the manifestation of five colors of light. Alternatively, it could be said that since timeless awareness is comparable to a mirror, it presents forms that constitute the reflections of the perfection of that awareness. And so it exhibits attributes, distinctly and clearly.

If we analyze this timeless awareness, five aspects can be distinguished, and if each of these is analyzed into five further aspects, this gives a total of twenty-five aspects. These aspects, moreover, constitute the inseparability of three factors: emptiness as originally pure basic space (the ground of freedom); the ground of being that is the innate radiance of naturally lucid timeless awareness; and the basic space of pure cognizing awareness.

(1) This inseparability constitutes timeless awareness as the basic space of phenomena. In analyzing this, *Naturally Arising Awareness* states:

This has five aspects: two of these aspects are timeless awareness as basic space and timeless awareness as the basic space of phenomena; two more are timeless awareness as the complete purity of basic space and timeless awareness as the supremacy of basic space; and there is timeless awareness as the nonduality of everything in basic space.¹⁰⁷⁶

(2) As for pure awareness, empty yet lucid, the way in which it arises is lucid as an unimpeded avenue of experience; this is mirrorlike timeless awareness. In analyzing this, *Naturally Arising Awareness* states:

This has five aspects: two of these aspects are timeless awareness that is like a mirror and timeless awareness that is like a supreme mirror; two more are timeless awareness as nonconceptual lucidity and timeless awareness as nonconceptual limpidity; and there is timeless awareness as supreme lucidity without reifying concepts.¹⁰⁷⁷ [4.229.a]

(3) There is a supreme equalness of timeless freedom within the basic space of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, which are to be experienced as equal. Within this equalness, the conditioning factors of that equalness are the three avenues of enlightened form, speech, and mind, which abide as the supreme equalness of three aspects (that is, the essence, nature, and responsiveness of being) such that they are not subject to restrictions or extremes. This is timeless awareness of equalness. In analyzing this, the foregoing source states:

This has five aspects: two of these aspects are timeless awareness of equalness and timeless awareness of unceasing equalness; two more are timeless awareness of the equalness of an unwavering state and timeless awareness of the equalness of an unceasing state; and there is timeless awareness of equalness that is not limited in any way whatsoever.¹⁰⁷⁸

(4) The direct realization of all phenomena in their distinctness is discerning timeless awareness. In analyzing this, the foregoing source states:

This has five aspects: two of these aspects are discerning timeless awareness and timeless awareness that analyzes all objects of experience with extreme precision; two more are timeless awareness that constitutes realization born in the moment and timeless awareness that ascertains all terminology;¹⁰⁷⁹ and there is timeless awareness that is realization¹⁰⁸⁰ not limited to terms and words.¹⁰⁸¹

(5) Once one's own benefit has been ensured within the scope of pure awareness, benefit for others ensues effortlessly, as spontaneously present as if supplied by a wish-fulfilling gem; this is timeless awareness as spontaneous fulfillment. In analyzing this, the foregoing source states:

This has five aspects: two of these aspects are timeless awareness as spontaneous fulfillment and timeless awareness that enacts all that is to be done; two more are timeless awareness that is not fixated on what is to be done and timeless awareness that relinquishes what is to be done; and there is timeless awareness that eradicates all false assumptions.¹⁰⁸²

The terms for these individual aspects, as well as the significance, essence, and other topics, are discussed in detail in the same tantra.

Timeless Awareness as Nirmāṇakāya [iii]

Nirmāṇakāya, all-pervasive, ensures all that is meaningful for those to be guided.

It entails four aspects of sublime intelligence, two for each of the two: knowing reality just as it is and knowing things in all their multiplicity.

Nirmāṇakāya, all-pervasive timeless awareness, manifests by harmonious accommodation to the individual receptivity of those to be guided, just as the reflection of the moon in water arises in accord with the context in

which it occurs. Nirmāṇakāya is not like the reflection of some inanimate material object, for it spontaneously ensures benefit for beings through two aspects of timeless awareness. [4.229.b]

Knowing reality just as it is constitutes realization of the indisputable essence of phenomena and the ultimate level of truth, and so reveals the actual nature of phenomena to be (like space) free of origin, cessation, or elaboration. Knowing things in all their multiplicity constitutes realization of the relative level of truth (which is to say, the distinct forms phenomena take) and so, considering objects in the phenomenal world in light of the eight analogies for illusoriness,¹⁰⁸³ it addresses such things as levels of acumen, spiritual teachings, karmic causality, and spiritual paths.

If we analyze these, knowing reality just as it is entails both knowing, just as it is, the way in which objects that manifest in the phenomenal world abide, and knowing, just as it is,¹⁰⁸⁴ the way in which emptiness abides as the actual nature of phenomena. This is similar to knowing the properties of a water lily (its blue color, for example) as well as knowing the lily itself. Knowing things in all their multiplicity entails knowing all the phenomena that can be evaluated by a nirmāṇakāya, both the pure range of phenomena that pertain to buddhas and the impure range of phenomena that pertain to ordinary beings. Thus, through analyzing these forms of knowing, we arrive at a total of four aspects.

Elucidation [3]

In the third place, concerning the elucidation of the essential significance of the foregoing discussions, the source verses state:

In summary, while one's own welfare is perfect within basic space,
as one is embraced by the vase body, endowed with six distinctive
attributes,

the welfare of others is found in the emerging of sambhogakāya,
awareness's own natural manifestation.

Its dynamic energy ensures that enlightened activity takes place,
spontaneously and without interruption,
for those to be tamed, in both pure and impure realms.

The state of Samantabhadra, that of perfect enlightenment, is the supreme level of freedom. Let us consider this briefly:

The youthful vase body is distinguished by six distinctive attributes that constitute the consummate qualities of basic space. These attributes are those of: emerging from the ground of being; manifesting within its own true nature; establishing a distinction;¹⁰⁸⁵ being free in the immediacy of that distinction; not relying on any other circumstance; and abiding in its natural place.

Within the expanse of this supreme, inwardly lucid state of original purity, the kāyas and timeless awareness abide innately as a unity beyond ordinary union or separation. That is to say, one's own welfare is perfect within basic space.

Further to that, due to the engaging of innate compassion in the situations of those to be guided, [4.230.a] for the welfare of others there is the emergence of awareness's own natural manifestation as sambhogakāya, ensuring that all of space is filled with a vast range of enlightened embodiments and pure realms, like clouds massing in the sky. The natural dynamic energy of this enlightened activity is to guide beings until saṃsāra is emptied. In pure realms, this is ensured by the "quasi-nirmāṇakāya sambhogakāya,"¹⁰⁸⁶ and in impure worlds by the emanations that guide beings there, like an array of lamps. This activity, like that of a wish-fulfilling gem or a wish-granting tree, takes place in such a way that it is accomplished spontaneously and without interruption.

*The foregoing constitutes the commentary on the fourth part,
concerning a definitive conclusion about the specific fruition according
to
the tradition of the Early Translation School of the secret mantra
approach.*

*This concludes the commentary on the tenth book,
an analysis of the paths and levels to be traversed,
from The Encompassing of All Knowledge,
also entitled The Precious Treasury of Sublime Teachings:
The Compendium of the Methods of All Spiritual Approaches
and A Treatise That Thoroughly Presents the Three Higher Trainings.*

THE CONCLUSION OF THE
Treasury of Knowledge

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THE SOURCE VERSES

The Nature of the *Treasury of Knowledge*

Since works composed in a rigid way by presumptuous people
adopt a superficial or biased perspective,
how could what is put together randomly by the untrained and
immature
ever be able to arouse admiration in the learned?

The Purpose for Writing the *Treasury of Knowledge*

Nevertheless, in these later days of the teachings, if those who are mere
shadows of spiritual practitioners
are unaware of the authentic origins of the Buddhadharma,
how could they have even a partial understanding of its characteristics?
I composed this work well, thinking it would serve to nourish such
people.

I have not told anything that has not been told before, nor spoken out
of any sense of competitiveness.

But people nowadays are of such small intelligence and diligence
that they cannot cross to the far shore of the ocean of the mainstream
Buddhist traditions,
so I have summarized these spiritual approaches to benefit those
like me.

How the *Treasury of Knowledge* Came to Be Written

Those who have read and are familiar with a few major source texts use their minds to skim over the general range of knowledge in the most cursory manner.

Those whose path is one of laboring with minor secular fields of knowledge

find the eye of their intelligence dulled for viewing the vast scope of the Buddha's excellent teachings.

I myself have not realized these in any authentic way.

Nevertheless, due to my having heard many teachings and having relied on the writings of holy masters,

I have composed this work with the intention of benefiting others.

May it serve to illuminate the Sage's flawless teachings for a long time!

Prayer of Aspiration

Through this, may beings enjoy happiness, well-being, and increase of spirituality;

observe completely pure discipline; train themselves by hearing, contemplating, and meditating on teachings;

reach the consummation of the spiritual paths and levels,

with their manifest states of realization; and attain as one the state of the three kāyas!

Confession of Errors and Auspicious Prayers

For any contradictions or errors, in the presence of the Three Roots and those endowed with the eye of spirituality,

I request forbearance, and ask that you grant that I be inspired to attain the most sublime state of purity and absolution;

please ensure the auspicious conditions for this treatise to endure

as long as the Sage's teachings, casting illumination on all, like the sun and moon!

Colophon

This treatise was written by me, who has heard many teachings, the positive effect of which has given rise in me to constant faith and a pure attitude toward the entire tradition of the Sage's teachings and those who uphold it, without any sectarian bias. I have been guided by the compassionate embrace of many holy masters, including the lord Maitreya, Tai Situ. I, Karina Ngawang Yönten Gyatso Trinlé Kunchap Pal Zangpo, also known as Lodrö Tayé Pai Dé, composed this at Kunzang Dechen Ösel Ling, in front of the cliff face of Tsadra Rinchendrak on Devikoṭi, the site of the retreat center associated with Palpung Tupten Chökorling. May this work bring great benefit to the teachings and to beings.

May all that is positive and excellent flourish!

THE CONCLUSION OF THE *Treasury of Knowledge*

The third major division of this work—that which is positive in the end¹⁰⁸⁷—is that of the concluding verses, which are equal in number to the treasures of spiritually advanced beings.¹⁰⁸⁸ They fall into five topics: a demonstration of the nature of this work, a statement of the purpose of writing it, a description of how the work came to be written, a prayer of aspiration that this work prove a worthy and meaningful undertaking, and a confession of errors combined with auspicious prayers. With this, the *Treasury of Knowledge* is brought to a positive conclusion.

The Nature of the Treasury of Knowledge

Since works composed in a rigid way by presumptuous people
adopt a superficial or biased perspective,
how could what is put together randomly by the untrained and
immature
ever be able to arouse admiration in the learned?

The great spiritual helmsmen who appeared in the past in this Land of Snows and founded lineages of spiritual accomplishment are entirely worthy of our highest respect. In later times, there have been those who presumed themselves to be learned and great, and who composed works for the most part in a complicated and very rigid way, using citations from authentic scriptures to support their statements, employing logical argumentation to refute or prove points, [4.230.b] and engaging in a plethora of words to explore the ramifications of their themes. As for the ongoing string of texts they have produced, some adopt a dilettantish perspective,

behaving like yaks when they cast about for tufts of grass. Others fall into a biased perspective, holding to their own interpretation and being dogmatic. In either case, they do no justice to the straightforward approach of a nonsectarian appreciation of the Sage's teachings.

Given that these authors have fallen under the sway of such influences, the vision that is their spiritual birthright has been clouded by the cataracts of their flawed thinking, and their spiritual training has not brought them to maturity in the slightest. Such spiritually immature people, with extremely feeble discernment, have produced trifling works by randomly putting together whatever words and meanings they came across. Such works amount to little more than self-promotion. How could they arouse admiration in those learned people imbued with dynamic intelligence, who delight in the discernment that derives from following the path of logical reasoning? In fact, they could not.

While all that is so, those great beings whose spiritual vision is one of a straightforward and unbiased appreciation of the teachings have composed works in a truly altruistic manner, performing a service that arouses such delight.

The Purpose for Writing the Treasury of Knowledge

Nevertheless, in these later days of the teachings, if those who are mere shadows of spiritual practitioners are unaware of the authentic origins of the Buddhадharma, how could they have even a partial understanding of its characteristics?

I composed this work well, thinking it would serve to nourish such people.

Since it is the prattling of fools that is unable to arouse admiration in the learned, one might wonder who would undertake the heavy burden of dedicating themselves to the tiresome task of writing volumes of such babble? In this regard, we live in times when the mere trappings of the Sage's teachings are being upheld, and a poor excuse for a practitioner as myself, propelled by karma into these circumstances, is a mere shadow who can only boast of having heard these teachings. Where the mainstream traditions of the holy Buddhадharma (of sūtra and tantra, together with the pith instructions they entail) came from in the first

place, [4.231.a] who established the various vehicles of spiritual practice, what profound key points these contain, which instruction manuals are major and which are minor, and where interpolations exist or not—if those such as myself remain unaware of even such things as these, how could they have even a partial understanding of the words and meanings that characterize these teachings?

So even though learned people who have undergone great training have no need of this work, I composed it out of an unfeigned altruism, thinking that it would serve to nourish such people as I have just described, by opening the eyes of their intelligence.

I have not told anything that has not been told before, nor spoken out of any sense of competitiveness.

But people nowadays are of such small intelligence and diligence that they cannot cross to the far shore of the ocean of the mainstream Buddhist traditions, so I have summarized these spiritual approaches to benefit those like me.

The heir of the victorious ones, Śāntideva, said:

I have not spoken here of anything that has not been heard before,
nor have I any skill as a poet.

Therefore, I cannot think that this will benefit others;

I have composed it in order to meditate upon it in my own
mind.¹⁰⁸⁹

Similarly, I have neither the merit nor the intelligence to reveal anything that has not been told before regarding the traditions of spiritual vehicles or to explain things in some novel and elegant way. Truly holy people are those who have, for their own benefit, reached the pinnacle of sublime intelligence in three ways¹⁰⁹⁰ and who have, for the benefit of others, illuminated the precious teachings with the blazing radiance of the three activities of explaining, debating, and writing. However, I have not spoken in order to compete with them, driven by some desire to become famous.

But the majority of people nowadays, born in these times of spiritual degeneration, have such a small degree of intelligence and such extremely

feeble diligence that they cannot begin to follow the path of hearing and contemplating teachings. Even if, by some chance, they can apply themselves to something positive due to a modicum of faith and intelligence, due to the paucity of those very two causes [4.231.b] it is exceedingly difficult for them to master even some minor secular field of knowledge. So it is plainly evident that they cannot cross to the far shore of the oceanlike expanse of the mainstream Buddhist traditions. I have written this work in order to train my own mind in these fields of knowledge and to be of benefit to others like me, who are of inferior intelligence, by collecting the crucial points of the teachings that will sustain them. I have abridged the words and meanings into a compendium of the methods of all spiritual approaches,¹⁰⁹¹ so that if one understands them well, one will be capable of “encompassing all knowledge”¹⁰⁹² through exercising the untrammelled discernment of one’s intelligence.

How the Treasury of Knowledge Came to Be Written

Those who have read and are familiar with a few major source texts use their minds to skim over the general range of knowledge in the most cursory manner.

Those whose path is one of laboring with minor secular fields of knowledge

find the eye of their intelligence dulled for viewing the vast scope of the Buddha’s excellent teachings.

I myself have not realized these in any authentic way.

Nevertheless, due to my having heard many teachings and having relied on the writings of holy masters,

I have composed this work with the intention of benefiting others.

May it serve to illuminate the Sage’s flawless teachings for a long time!

Nowadays, those who have read, and are familiar with, a few of the major Buddhist source texts that are well known (dealing with the Madhyamaka philosophy, the Prajñāpāramitā literature, Vinaya, the Abhidharma, and so forth) are cynical about the more common fields of knowledge; they interpret the enlightened intention of the victorious ones through the filter of their own concepts; and they make snap judgments about the pro-

found and definitive secret teachings found in the classes of tantra. They use their minds clumsily, to skirt over the general range of knowledge in the most cursory manner, treating them with disrespect.

Those whose path is one of laboring assiduously with minor secular fields of knowledge (such as Sanskrit grammar, valid cognition, medicine, and astrology) find that the eye of their intelligence is dulled for viewing, just as they are, the Buddha's excellent teachings in all their vast scope and profound depths—the sūtras and tantras, as well as the commentaries on the enlightened intention of these sources. [4.232.a]

To say nothing of having realized these more common and extraordinary fields of knowledge, as well as their auxiliary subjects in any authentic way, I myself have not gained the confidence that comes from studying and becoming familiar with them to even a partial degree. Nevertheless, in these times of spiritual degeneration Vajradhara has indeed manifested in the forms of my spiritual mentors, and in particular Mañjughoṣa, the sole father of the victorious ones, has taken the forms of two of my masters.¹⁰⁹³ It is due to the kindness of these learned and spiritually accomplished tutors that I have heard many teachings of the sūtras and tantras, of the mainstream traditions of Sarma and Nyingma, and of other spiritual instructions, secular fields of knowledge, and related subjects. My studies have included the works of the great mainstream textual traditions of the holy country of India, the ten great pillars who upheld the lineages of explanation in the Land of Snows, and the masters of the eight great lineages of spiritual accomplishment in this land.¹⁰⁹⁴ In particular, I have studied the sublime writings that were composed in so excellent a manner by many great and holy masters who have become authorities, including the omniscient Rangjung Dorjé and the eighth lord and their followers;¹⁰⁹⁵ the king of the dharma, the noble Longchen Rabjam; the hereditary masters of the Sakya school, who were emanations of Mañjuśrī;¹⁰⁹⁶ the great and venerable master of the Jonang tradition;¹⁰⁹⁷ and Chökyi Jungné,¹⁰⁹⁸ an omniscient being in these times of strife.

Having relied on these works, I have composed this work with the intention of benefiting others who are my peers, if only slightly. May anything that derives from this undertaking, contributing to the increase of what is positive, be capable of serving to illuminate the Sage's flawless teachings for a long time!

Prayer of Aspiration

Through this, may beings enjoy happiness, well-being, and
 increase of spirituality;
 observe completely pure discipline; train themselves by hearing,
 contemplating, and meditating on teachings;
 reach the consummation of the spiritual paths and levels,
 with their manifest states of realization; and attain as one the state
 of the three kāyas!

With sincere motivation and dedication to my task, I have completed this trifling good work, my intention being to emulate truly holy masters. [4.232.b] Through the power of this undertaking, may countless beings, who are the foundation in whom any and all spiritual teachings take root, enjoy physical and mental happiness and well-being, attaining higher states of rebirth in the shorter term. May they enjoy the increase that comes with spiritual activity, so that they eventually reach the conclusion of the path that leads to the definitive excellence of enlightenment.

On that basis, may the precious teachings of the victorious ones, which are the embodiment of scriptural authority and experiential truth, flourish and last for a long time. May all who embrace the teachings observe the higher training of completely pure discipline, unsullied by a single flaw. Then, may they train themselves through the sublime intelligence that comes from hearing, contemplating, and meditating on teachings. May they thus reach the consummation of the spiritual paths and levels, with their manifest states of realization. With this, may all beings without exception, whose numbers fill space, swiftly attain as one the state that embodies the three kāyas and the five aspects of timeless awareness!

This source verse completely subsumes all the topics covered in this treatise from beginning to end.

Confession of Errors and Auspicious Prayers

For any contradictions or errors, in the presence of the Three
 Roots and those endowed with the eye of spirituality,
 I request forbearance, and ask that you grant that I be inspired to
 attain the most sublime state of purity and absolution;

please ensure the auspicious conditions for this treatise to endure as long as the Sage's teachings, casting illumination on all, like the sun and moon!

With these words, I acknowledge that there may be any number of flaws in this work: there may, for example, be contradictions in the way I express myself in words due to my mind's falling under the sway of delusion and ignorance; there may be errors due to my misconstruing the meaning of the topics I discuss; and there may be ways in which I have treated especially profound and secret topics with disrespect, however unintentional. In the presence of the Three Jewels and the Three Roots and those learned and accomplished masters who are definitely endowed with spiritual vision and stand as my witnesses, from the depths of my heart I acknowledge and request forbearance for all such flaws. In doing so, I ask that they inspire me to attain the most sublime state of purity and absolution. [4.233.a] I ask that they please grant their blessings in an ongoing flow, to ensure the most auspicious conditions of all that is auspicious—that this treatise, which brings together the quintessential and profound topics found in the mainstream traditions of India and Tibet, will endure as long as the precious teachings of the Sage; to ensure that for that long it will remain uncorrupted; to ensure that it will cast illumination pervasively and without bias, like the shining sun and moon, radiating as a constant source of benefit for all who desire liberation; and to ensure the auspiciousness of fame, so that the positive effects of this treatise's renown will pervade the three planes of existence.

This treatise was written by me, who has heard many teachings, the positive effect of which has given rise in me to constant faith and pure attitude toward the entire tradition of the Sage's teachings and those who uphold it, without any sectarian bias. I have been guided by the compassionate embrace of many holy masters, including the lord Maitreya, Tai Situ. I, Karma Ngawang Yönten Gyatso Trinklé Kunchap Pal Zangpo, also known as Lodrö Tayé Pai Dé,¹⁰⁹⁹ composed this at Kunzang Dechen Ösel Ling, in front of the cliff face of Tsadra Rinchendrak on Devikoṭi, the site of the retreat center associated with Palpung Tupten Chökorling.¹¹⁰⁰ May this work bring great benefit to the teachings and to beings.

May all that is positive and excellent flourish!

With this, following the completion of the basic text itself, the conclusion discusses both the author and the act of composing the text.

Śrī śrī śrī siddham svasti sarvadā spharaṇam kurvantu¹¹⁰¹

The teachings are the light of this world,
the complete accomplishment of what is positive and excellent,
victorious over the two extremes.

From the blossoming lotus of my undivided faith in these flow the
sweet drops of nectar that nurture and protect me.¹¹⁰²

While this will not serve to sustain the learned,
whose stomachs are filled with the nectar of truly excellent explanations,
it may serve as a flutelike melody of my speech,
to inspire the bees—those of less substantial intelligence. [4.233.b]

My vision is too feeble for me to explain the dharma well,
in ways that have not been used before.

My intelligence is too feeble for my explanations to come to terms with
the myriad topics encompassed by enlightened intent.

But the explanations I have given herein follow the example of
authoritative sources,
not something I made up on my own.

In particular, they are part of an oral tradition that delights the
protector Mañjuśrī,
and so are worthy of one's trust.

People endowed with both merit and intelligence are hard to come by
in this world.

Their excellent explanations are like a pile of gems that are not kept
polished nowadays.

However, since those who rely even slightly on these gems find that they
remove the poverty that hampers liberation,
may this work, which distills the essential worth of their crucial points
long be available to intelligent people.

How could one's vision be flawless when it is clouded by a hundred veils
of deep-seated delusion?

Yet because I have looked into all traditions and hold them in my esteem,

it pains me to see those with fanatical adherence to some biased perspective.

While the statements in this work may not please some great beings who hold that their individual interpretations are true, may it serve as a massing cloudbank of offerings to delight my gurus and the victorious ones and their heirs.

For those whose minds feel only a biased regard, learn herein of the single path to which all the Buddhadharma leads, like those who, upon having their eyesight restored, behold the sky. May they drink to their hearts' content, imbibing the quintessence of the Buddha's teachings without sectarian bias, their throats filled with threefold faith. May this experience act as an emetic, purging them of all the poisons of sectarianism, so that the ocean of the sacred Buddhadharma unfolds for them.

This work does not involve the haughtiness of pedants, who refute the beliefs of others while asserting their own. It follows the example set by the truly wise of old, for it illustrates, if only partially, the incredible avenues of the teachings. It is a lamp of gem light for those plunged in the darkness of delusion and a treasure trove of nectar for those deprived of studying the teachings. May they not fall into sectarianism, and may this precious spiritual source yield to them all that they wish for. [4.234.a]

By gaining unerring insight into the process of interdependent causes, conditions, and results, may they dispel confusion concerning the ground and path by becoming wise in making moral choices of what to accept and what to reject. May the golden sun of noble awareness radiate knowledge of all things and an undeluded mastery of skillful means,

shining always in the sky of the spiritual realm,
illuminating the path of the authentic view of reality.

This work is positive at the outset,
for it presents the path of benefit and well-being in the threefold world.
It is positive in the interim,
for it presents the middle way that avoids dualistic extremes,
bringing well-being and excellence when it is followed to the fullest.
It is positive in the end,
for it is the symbolic expression of the unique state of flawless and
consummate peace.
May the auspiciousness of this adorn the immeasurable jeweled mansion
that lies at the very heart of space,
so that it stands forever in all its magnificence!

This text was composed as a somewhat brief commentary on the source verses entitled the *Encompassing of All That Is Knowable*, with an emphasis on promoting ease of understanding. It was specifically requested by one who illuminates the entire range of the Sage's teachings, the omniscient and all-seeing Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, who presented me with abundant gifts, first and foremost among these some fine representations of enlightened form, speech, and mind. He bestowed his request on me like a garland of *udumvara* blossoms coming to rest on the crown of my head.¹¹⁰³

I, the author, have also been nurtured by many extraordinary mentors, especially the lord of the world, the Karmapa, and the lord Maitreya, Tai Situ, resting myself in the cool shade of their compassion.¹¹⁰⁴ I am but a mere shadow of a well-studied spiritual renunciate, a poor excuse of a practitioner who goes by many names, such as Karma Ngawang Yönten Gyatso Trinlé Kunchap Palzangpo¹¹⁰⁵ and Loter Rabga Tsangjung Nyempai Langtsoi Danang¹¹⁰⁶ (the name given to me by my Sanskrit tutor). I wrote the commentary, based on my source verses, at the retreat center of Tsadra Rinchen Drak, "the third glorious Devikoṭi,"¹¹⁰⁷ the hermitage associated with Palpung Tupten Chökorling, the primary monastic seat of the Kagyü lineage in eastern Tibet. The text was written in a more-or-less continuous period from summer through the next winter.¹¹⁰⁸ [4.234.b] The scribe who prepared the entire manuscript was Karma Tashi Özer, who upholds the principles of the Three Compilations and maintains the

discipline of his spiritual training in an excellent manner.¹¹⁰⁹ The work was finally completed on the morning of the second “day of joy” in the waxing phase of the moon,¹¹¹⁰ when there was a favorable aspect between Jupiter and the constellation Puşya, during the fourth month of the Wood Rat Year, a most majestic year in the sexagesimal cycle.¹¹¹¹

May this endeavor serve as a cause for the precious teachings of the Victorious One to endure long as a source of benefit and happiness and for the noble and authentic spiritual path to be brilliantly illuminated for all countless beings!

May virtue and excellence flourish!

APPENDIX 1: A CONCISE VERSE SUMMARY
OF THE *TREASURY OF KNOWLEDGE*,
BY JAMGÖN KONGTRUL LODRÖ TAYÉ

As a concise summary, let me elucidate the very essence of this work.

Positive at the outset is the introductory section,
which discusses the title and includes the invocation and my statement
of intention to compose this.

Positive in the middle are the ten books, each with four chapters.

The first book discusses the animate and inanimate universe as a field in
which beings are guided spiritually, and the causes thereof:
the general cosmology of the Mahāyāna tradition;
an analysis of the common treatment^{III2} of our world-system,
Endurance;
a classification of space and time according to the Kālacakra system,
as well as the dimensions of the universe;
the process of causation according to the Abhidharma;
and the Dzogchen tradition, which frees one of confusion.^{III3}

The second book discusses the way in which the Teacher appeared in
this world as a guide:
the way in which the Teacher^{III4} followed the path to enlightenment;
the descriptions of buddhahood according to the Hīnayāna and
Mahāyāna approaches;
the twelve deeds the Victorious One performed in this world;

and the analysis of the kāyas and pure realms that is specific to the pinnacle approach.

The third book discusses the classifications of the sacred dharma that was taught:

identifying the sublime and sacred teachings of the dharma;
analyzing the specific cycles of the scriptural transmission of the teachings;

describing how the Buddha's Word was compiled in three successive stages;

and detailing the way in which the classes of tantra and sādhana of the Early Translation School were transmitted.

The fourth book discusses the origins and historical development of the dharma in India and Tibet:

the way in which Buddhism spread in India;

the earlier and later traditions of teachings in Tibet;

the way in which the eight lineages of spiritual accomplishment and other schools came about;

the secular fields of knowledge;

and the way in which Buddhism spread in other regions.¹¹¹⁵

The fifth book discusses the higher training in ethical discipline:

the means of relying on a spiritual teacher and how the teachings are explained and heard;

the vows of individual liberation according to the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna;

the two spiritual vehicles of bodhisattva training;

the tantric vows of the early and later schools;

and the general theme of the three levels of ordination.¹¹¹⁶

The sixth book discusses the topics for hearing teachings on all that is to be known:

the major and minor fields of knowledge in the secular context;

a general classification of fields of knowledge in general, including the five bases;¹¹¹⁷

the philosophical systems of the greater and lesser dialectical approaches;¹¹¹⁸
and the older and newer schools of the Vajrayāna.¹¹¹⁹

The seventh book discusses how sublime intelligence develops through hearing the teachings:
the four keys of understanding for evaluating the teachings;
the topics to be evaluated (the two levels of provisional and definitive truth and the phenomena of interdependent origination);
the view of the lack of identity in things, which is crucial to all approaches in general;
and the four contemplations that turn the mind, providing the foundation for meditative discipline.¹¹²⁰

The eighth book discusses how higher states of absorption develop through meditation:
calm abiding and deeper insight, the two common foundations of meditative absorption;
the stages of meditation in the greater and lesser cause-based approaches;¹¹²¹
the tradition that emphasizes the Anuttara tantras of the secret mantra approach;¹¹²²
and the traditions of the eight lineages of spiritual accomplishment, with emphasis on their esoteric instructions.¹¹²³

The ninth book discusses how, through spiritual practice, one traverses the paths and levels:
the paths and levels of the dialectical approach;
general and specific classifications of the tantric paths and levels;
the ways in which conduct is an enhancement of practice, as an auxiliary to the path;
and the particular presentation of the inner tantras of the Early Translation School.

The tenth book discusses the consummate fruition of complete freedom:
the way of awakening to buddhahood according to the ordinary Pāramitāyāna;

the more common activities and attainments in the Vajrayāna;
 the extraordinary and sublime attainment of mahāmudrā, the state of
 primordial unity;
 and the fruition aspect of tantra—the level of freedom according to the
 Early Translation School.¹¹²⁴

Positive in the final analysis is the conclusion, which discusses the nature
 of the work,
 its purpose, how it came to be written, prayers of aspiration, and
 auspicious prayers.

May the sublime and quintessential nectar of excellent explanation,
 received through the guru's grace,
 nourish the teachings and those who uphold the teachings,
 so that, for a vast range of eons in this universe,
 all these may live long and their enlightened activities pervade
 everywhere throughout the three planes of existence!¹¹²⁵

Immediately upon my receiving permission from the sovereign lord, my
 guru the omniscient Jamyang Khyentsei Wangpo, who is the very embodi-
 ment of supreme and nonreferential compassion, this was composed at
 Kunzang Dechen Ösel Ling, the retreat center of Palpung Monastery, by
 me, the deluded, ignorant, and worthless one,¹¹²⁶ Karma Ngawang Yönten
 Gyatso Trinlé Kunkhyab Pal Zangpo.
 May virtue and excellence flourish!

APPENDIX 2: OUTLINE OF BOOKS NINE AND TEN

BOOK NINE

[Part I. The Paths and Levels in the Cause-Based Dialectical Approach]

- I. The Paths of the Dialectical Approach
 - A. Essential Quality of a Spiritual Path
 - B. Analytical Enumeration of the Paths
 - C. Derivation of the Term
 - D. Distinction between Actuality and Imputation
 - E. Extensive Explanation of the Paths
 - 1. The Path of Accumulation
 - a. Characteristics
 - b. Basis
 - c. Analysis
 - d. Nature
 - e. Distinctive Processes
 - f. Qualities
 - g. Function
 - h. Derivation of the Term
 - 2. The Path of Linkage
 - a. Characteristics
 - b. Basis
 - c. Analysis
 - i. Meditative Warmth
 - ii. Peak Experience
 - iii. Patient Acceptance

- iv. Highest Mundane Experience
- d. Nature
- e. Distinctive Processes
- f. Qualities
- g. Function
- h. Derivation of the Terms
- 3. The Path of Seeing
 - a. Characteristics
 - b. Basis
 - c. Analysis
 - d. Nature
 - i. Elimination on the Path of Seeing
 - aa. Characteristics of the Factors to Be Eliminated
 - bb. Detailed Analysis of the Factors to Be Eliminated
 - cc. How These Factors Are Eliminated
 - ii. The Onset of the Path of Seeing
 - e. Distinctive Processes
 - f. Qualities
 - g. Function
 - h. Derivation of the Term
- 4. The Path of Meditation
 - a. Characteristics
 - b. Basis
 - c. Analysis
 - d. Nature
 - i. Elimination on the Path of Meditation
 - ii. The Development of the Path of Meditation
 - e. Distinctive Processes
 - f. Qualities
 - g. Function
 - h. Derivation of the Term
- 5. The Path of Consummation
 - a. Characteristics
 - b. Basis
 - c. Analysis
 - d. Nature
 - e. Distinctive Processes

- f. Qualities
- g. Function
- h. Derivation of the Term

II. The Levels of the Dialectical Approach

A. Two Kinds of Levels

- 1. Overview
- 2. Extensive Explanation
 - a. The Levels of Freedom from Attachment
 - b. The Levels Associated with Buddhahood

B. Distinctions between These Levels

C. Extensive Explanation of the Levels Associated with Buddhahood

- 1. Essence
- 2. Basis of Characteristics
- 3. Derivation of the Term
- 4. Analysis
- 5. Distinctive Features
 - a. Names and Their Derivation
 - b. Thorough Training and Progress
 - c. Spiritual Practice and Individual Practitioner
 - d. The Three Higher Trainings and Components of Practice
 - e. Purity, Elimination, and Realization
 - f. Specific Qualities and States of Rebirth
- 6. Definitive Rationale for Ten Spiritual Levels

[Part 2. The Levels and Paths in the Vajrayāna]

I. The Connection between Vajrayāna Meditation and the Thirty-seven Factors

II. The Special Nature of the Tantras and Oral Instructions

A. Intent of the Anuttarayoga Tantras

- 1. The Path of Accumulation
- 2. The Path of Linkage
 - a. Meditative Warmth
 - b. The Peak Experience
 - c. Patient Acceptance and the Highest Mundane Experience
- 3. The Path of Seeing
- 4. The Path of Meditation
- 5. The Path of No More Training

B. The Kālacakra Tradition

1. The Path of Accumulation
2. The Path of Linkage
 - a. The Four Anticipatory Phases
 - b. The Levels of Meditative Absorption
3. The Path of Seeing
 - a. The Actual Path of Seeing
 - b. The Distinctive Features of the Path of Seeing
4. The Path of Meditation
5. The Path of Consummation

III. The Vajrayāna Traditions of Tibet

A. Preliminary Remarks

B. The Tibetan Schools of Vajrayāna

1. Paths
 - a. The Path of Accumulation
 - b. The Path of Linkage
 - c. The Path of Seeing
 - d. The Path of Meditation
 - e. The Path of No More Training
2. Levels
 - a. Manifest Realization in the Levels
 - b. The Graduated Path
3. Other Traditions

[Part 3. Conduct: The Process of Enhancement]

I. Conduct in the Three Yānas

II. Conduct in the Anuttara Tantras

A. Kinds of Conduct

1. Bases of Analysis
2. Essence

B. Detailed Treatment

1. Ordinary Conduct
 - a. Summary
 - b. Extensive Explanation
 - i. Intent and Involvement
 - ii. Reliance and Training

2. Spiritual Deportment of Pure Awareness

a. Essence

b. The Individual

c. Subcategories

d. Stages

i. Essence

ii. Occasion

iii. Purpose

iv. Process

aa. Environment

bb. Companions

cc. Motivation

dd. Frame of Reference

ee. Attributes

ff. Activities

gg. Support

hh. Training

ii. Benefits and Qualities

jj. How One Engages in Conduct

e. Conduct in the Gaṇacakra Ritual

i. Elaborate Mode

aa. Practice of the Maṇḍala

bb. Enjoyment of Sense Pleasures

cc. Cakrasaṃvara Tradition: Gatherings of Heralds

ii. Unelaborate Mode

iii. Extremely Unelaborate Mode

f. Related Issues

i. Degrees of Acumen

ii. Distinctive Features of Empowerment

iii. Intent of the Kālacakra Tantra

aa. Conduct of the Four Vajras

bb. Conduct of the Six Families

cc. Conduct of the Six Transcendent Perfections

iv. Summary

g. Wrathful Activity

C. Traditions of Past Masters

[Part 4. The Paths and Levels in the Three Yogas]

I. The Outer and Inner Levels of Significance

A. The Paths

B. The Levels

II. The Paths and Levels of Mahāyoga

A. Entering the Path of Mahāyoga

1. The Path of Sublime Intelligence

2. The Path of Skillful Means

B. Traversing the Path of Mahāyoga

1. The Path of Accumulation

2. The Path of Application

3. The Path of Seeing

a. Masters of Awareness Still Subject to the Complete
Maturation of Karma

b. Masters of Awareness with Power over Longevity

4. The Path of Meditation

5. The Path of Consummation

6. Parallels and Degrees of Progress

C. Conduct in Mahāyoga

III. The Paths and Levels of Anuyoga

A. Acumen and Anuyoga Practice

B. Five Yogic Phases

1. The Path of Accumulation

2. The Path of Linkage

3. The Path of Seeing

4. The Path of Meditation

5. The Path of Consummation

IV. The Paths and Levels of Atiyoga

A. Empowerment in Atiyoga

1. Path and Empowerment

2. Four Levels of Masters of Awareness

B. Four Visions of Atiyoga

1. Sixteen Visions of Atiyoga

2. Sixteen Levels of Atiyoga

C. Qualities in Atiyoga

D. Conduct in Atiyoga

V. Summary

BOOK TEN

[Part 1. The Fruition in the Dialectical Approach]

I. Nirvāṇa according to the Three Spiritual Approaches

II. Buddhahood according to the Mahāyāna

A. Nature of Buddhahood

B. Meaning of the Term “Buddha”

C. Process of Accomplishment

1. Causes

2. Environment and Process

3. Fruition

a. Kāyas

i. Characteristics

aa. Dharmakāya

1# Meaning and Characteristics

2# Analysis

bb. Sambhogakāya

1# Meaning and Characteristics

2# Analysis

cc. Nirmāṇakāya

1# Meaning and Characteristics

2# Analysis

dd. The Presentation in the *Highest Continuum*

ii. Specific Features

aa. Equalness

bb. Constancy

cc. Manifestation

b. Timeless Awareness

i. Detailed Analysis

ii. Meaning of the Terms and Essential Qualities

aa. Awareness as the Basic Space of Phenomena

bb. Mirrorlike Awareness

cc. Awareness as Equalness

dd. Discerning Awareness

ee. Awareness as Ensured Fulfillment

iii. Causes

iv. Transformation

v. Association with the Kāyas

c. The Qualities of Enlightenment

i. Overview

ii. Extensive Explanation

aa. Divestment

1# The Intent of the *Highest Continuum*

a# The Ten Powers

b# The Four States of Fearlessness

c# The Eighteen Distinctive Qualities

2# The Intent of the *Ornament of Manifest Realization*

bb. Maturation

1# Overview

2# Extensive Explanation

a# The Thirty-two Major Marks of Perfect Form

b# The Eighty Minor Marks of Perfect Form

c# The Sixty Qualities of Enlightened Speech

d. Enlightened Activity

i. Seven Ramifications of Enlightened Deeds

ii. Summary

[Part 2. The More Common Attainments in the Vajrayāna]

I. Concise Presentation

II. Specific Explanations

A. Introduction

B. Extensive Explanation

1. Enlightened Activities

2. Siddhis

a. Lesser Siddhis

b. Intermediate Siddhis

c. Greater Siddhis

d. Khecara

i. Greater State

ii. Lesser States

[Part 3. The Fruition in the Vajrayāna]

I. Fruition Aspect of Tantra

II. Nature of the Fruition Aspect

- A. Essence
- B. Enumeration of Terms
- C. Distinction between Actual Fruition and Nominal Result
- D. Causal Factors
 - 1. Working Basis
 - 2. Essence
 - 3. Methods of Application
 - a. External
 - b. Internal
 - 4. Specific Issues
 - 5. Conclusion
- E. Result
 - 1. Primordial Unity That Involves Training
 - a. Process of Attainment
 - b. General Characteristics
 - i. Twenty-three Aspects of Primordial Unity
 - ii. Thirty-one Auxiliary Aspects
 - iii. Summary
 - c. Delineation of the Level of Buddhahood
 - d. Analogies Illustrating the Vajrakāya
 - e. Analysis of the Kāya
 - 2. Primordial Unity That Involves No More Training
 - a. Working Basis
 - b. Occasion
 - c. Essence
 - d. Characteristics
 - e. Auxiliary Attributes
 - i. Overview
 - ii. Extensive Explanation
 - aa. The Seven Attributes of Integration
 - bb. The Eight Qualities of Purity
 - cc. The Eight Experiential Qualities
 - dd. The Eight Qualities of Powerful Mastery
 - ee. The Eight Additional Attributes
 - f. Distinctive Attributes
 - i. Kāyas
 - aa. Realm
 - bb. Essence

- cc. Analysis
- dd. Three or Four Kāyas
- ee. Analysis of Family Types
 - 1# Basis of Analysis
 - 2# Analysis of Specific Expressions
 - 3# Nature of the Family Types
- ii. Timeless Awareness
 - aa. Five Aspects
 - bb. Seven Aspects
 - 1# Seven Primary Aspects
 - 2# Forty Auxiliary Ramifications
 - cc. Ten Extraordinary Aspects of Knowledge
- g. The Qualities and Activity of Enlightenment

[Part 4. The Fruition in the Nyingma School]

- I. Fruition Aspect of Tantra according to the *Web of Magical Display*
 - A. General Presentation
 - B. Detailed Treatment
 - 1. Benefit for Oneself
 - a. Accomplishment
 - b. Characteristics
 - c. Enumerations
 - i. Terms
 - ii. Essential Categories
 - aa. Distinctive Features
 - 1# Extensive Enumeration
 - 2# Middle-Length Enumeration
 - 3# Concise Enumeration
 - a# Concise Enumeration
 - b# Extremely Concise Enumeration
 - i# Brief Presentation
 - ii# More Extensive Presentation
 - aa# Kāyas
 - bb# Timeless Awareness
 - bb. Inseparability
 - 2. Benefit for Others
 - 3. Buddhahood in the Sūtras and Tantras

- a. Dharmakāya
- b. Sambhogakāya
- c. Nirmāṇakāya

II. Gaining Freedom according to the Vajra Heart Essence of Utter Lucidity

A. Levels of Acumen

- 1. Overview
- 2. Extensive Explanation
 - a. Lesser Acumen
 - b. Middling Acumen
 - c. Higher Acumen

B. Supreme Freedom

- 1. Manifest Enlightenment
 - a. Essence
 - b. Derivation of Terminology
 - c. Characteristics
 - d. Nature
 - e. Mode of Abiding
 - f. Pure Realms
 - g. Those to Be Guided
 - h. Function
 - i. Constancy
 - j. Detailed Analysis
 - i. Overview of the Three Kāyas
 - ii. Detailed Analysis of the Distinct Expressions of the Three Kāyas
- 2. Nature of Timeless Awareness
 - a. Essence
 - b. Derivation of the Term
 - c. Detailed Analysis
 - i. Timeless Awareness as Dharmakāya
 - ii. Timeless Awareness as Sambhogakāya
 - iii. Timeless Awareness as Nirmāṇakāya
- 3. Elucidation

GLOSSARY

(The emphasis in this glossary is on the Tibetan terminology; the Sanskrit equivalents have been provided where available.)

| ENGLISH | TIBETAN | SANSKRIT |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| abiding | gnas pa | avasthita |
| abiding in its natural place | rang sar gnas pa | |
| abiding mode | gnas tshul | |
| ability to abide wherever one wishes | gang du 'dod par gnas pa | |
| ability to move everywhere | gar yang phyin pa | prāpti |
| absence of affliction | mi gdung ba | atapta |
| absence of afflictive states | nyon mongs med pa | akleśa |
| absence of cessation | 'gog pa med pa | anirodha |
| absence of fluctuation | 'phel 'bri med pa | |
| absence of independent nature | rang bzhin med pa | niḥsvabhāva |
| absence of naïve assumption | smon pa med pa | aprañihita |
| absence of oblivion | bsnyel ba med pa | asamoṣa |

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| absence of subtle traits | mtshan ma med pa | animitta |
| absence of torment | gdung ba med pa | atāpa |
| accomplishment of armor | go cha'i sgrub pa | saṃnāha pratipatti |
| accomplishment of the four vajras | rdo rje bzhi sgrub | |
| accomplishment that brings engagement | 'jug pa'i sgrub pa | prasthāna pratipatti |
| acting through a process of spontaneous accomplishment | lhun gyis grub par mdzad pa | |
| activity that guides beings in whatever way is necessary | gang la gang 'dul gyi phrin las | |
| actual | dngos | |
| actual nature of phenomena | chos nyid | dharmatā |
| actual nature that does not entail forgetfulness | brjed pa mi mnga' ba'i chos nyid | asaṃṣa dharmatā |
| adventitious distortions | glo bur gyi dri ma | āgantuka mala |
| afflictive aspect of consciousness | nyon mongs pa'i yid | kliṣṭamānas |
| afflictive obscurations | nyon mongs pa'i sgrib pa | kleśāvaraṇa |
| afflictive state | nyon mongs | kleśa |
| afterdeath state | bar do | anatarābhava |
| age of strife | rtsod ldan gyi dus | kalaha yuga |
| aggregate of consciousness | rnam shes kyi phung po | vijñāna skandha |
| aggregate of formative factors | 'du byed kyi phung po | saṃskāra skandha |

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|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| aggregate of forms | gzugs kyi phung po | rūpa skandha |
| aggregate of perceptions | 'du shes kyi phyung po | saṃjñā skandha |
| aggregate of sensations | tshor ba'i phung po | vedana skandha |
| aging and death | rga shi | jarāmaṇara |
| alchemical method | bcud len | rasāyana |
| all-consuming
conceptual labeling | kun brtags | parikalpita |
| all-engaging conduct
of a protector | mgon po kun tu spyod pa | |
| all-pervasive origin
of suffering | kun 'byung | samudaya |
| allure | sgeg pa | lāśya |
| altruistic attitude | lhag bsam | ādhyāśaya |
| anger | khong khro | pratigha |
| animate and
inanimate universe | snod bcud | bhājana sattva |
| annihilation | tshar gcod pa | nigraha |
| another's body as the
source of sublime
intelligence | gzhan lus shes rab | |
| anticipation of liberation | thar pa cha mthun | mokṣabhāgiya |
| anticipatory experience
of utter lucidity | dpe'i 'od gsal | upamāprabhāsvara |
| anticipatory phase | nges 'byed cha mthun | nirvedhabhāgiya |
| antidote as the
underlying ground | gzhi'i gnyen po | ādhāra pratipakṣa |
| antidote involving
direct confrontation | rnam par sun 'byin
pa'i gnyen po | dūṣaṇa pratipakṣa |

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| antidote involving distancing | thag bsring ba'i gnyen po | dūratā pratipakṣa |
| antidote involving elimination | spong ba'i gnyen po | virati pratipakṣa |
| antidote to conditioned existence | srid pa'i gnyen po | bhāva pratipakṣa |
| antipathy | mi sdug pa | bībhatsa |
| application of wrath | drag shul gyi sbyor ba | |
| approach | theg pa | yāna |
| approach of gods and humans | lha mi'i theg pa | deva nara yāna |
| approach of purity | tshang pa'i theg pa | brāhma yāna |
| approach of the transcendent perfections | pha rol tu phyin pa'i theg pa | pāramitā yāna |
| arhat | dgra bcom pa | arhat |
| ascertaining the hero's birthright, level of | dpa' bo rigs 'byed kyi sa | |
| asexual | za ma | pañḍaka |
| aspiration | smon pa | prañidhi |
| attainment | thob pa | prāpta |
| attention | sems pa | cintana |
| attention (to the complete form of the deity) | sku ril bur 'dzin pa | |
| authentic | rnal ma | |
| authentic activity | yang dag pa'i las kyi mtha' | samyak karmānta |
| authentic discernment of language | nges pa'i tshig so so yang dag par rig pa | nirukti pratisaṃvid |

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| authentic discernment of meanings | don so so yang dag par rig pa | artha pratisaṃvid |
| authentic discernment of poise | spobs pa so so yang dag par rig pa | pratibhāna pratisaṃvid |
| authentic discernment of spiritual teachings | chos so so yang dag par rig pa | dharma pratisaṃvid |
| authentic effort | yang dag pa'i rtsol ba | samyak vyāyāma |
| authentic livelihood | yang dag pa'i 'tsho ba | samyak ājīva |
| authentic meditative absorption | yang dag pa'i ting nge 'dzin | samyak samādhi |
| authentic mindfulness | yang dag pa'i dran pa | samyak smṛti |
| authentic overcoming of habitual patterns | bag chags yang dag par bcom pa | |
| authentic speech | yang dag pa'i ngag | samyak vāk |
| authentic thought | yang dag pa'i rtog pa | samyak saṃkalpa |
| authentic view | yang dag pa'i lta ba | samyak dṛṣṭi |
| authenticity | bden pa | sat |
| awakened mind | byang chub kyi sems | bodhicitta |
| awakening and unfolding | sangs rgyas | buddha |
| awakening attitude | byang chub kyi sems | bodhicitta |
| awareness in which tangible impressions are absent | rnam med shes pa | nirākārajñāna |
| awareness reaching full expression | rig pa tshad phebs | |
| awe | rngam pa | adbhuta |
| baffling, activity of | rmugs par 'gyur pa'i las | |

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| banishing, activity of | bskrad pa'i las | |
| basic space of phenomena | chos kyi dbyings | dharmadhātu |
| basis of all ordinary experience | kun gzhi | ālaya |
| basis of experience that is the true ground of being | gzhi don gyi kun gzhi | |
| basis of ordinary experience as true linkage | sbyor ba don gyi kun gzhi | |
| basis of reliance, level of | brten pa gzhi'i sa | |
| bearer of bindu | thig le 'dzin pa | |
| becoming | srid pa | bhāva |
| beginner's stage | las dang po pa'i sa | |
| beholding the truth | bden pa mthong ba | satya darśana |
| being an embodiment of mind and subtle energy | yid dang rlung gi lus | |
| being free in the immediacy of that distinction | phyed thog tu grol ba | |
| bhaga of the vajra queen | rdo rje btsun mo'i bha ga | |
| bindu | thig le | bindu |
| birth | skye ba | jāti |
| birth canal | skye gnas | bhaga |
| blessing | byin rlabs | adhiṣṭhāna |
| blinding activity | long bar 'gyur pa'i las | |
| bliss | bde ba | sukha |

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| blockage in subtle channel | rtsa mdud | nāḍīgranthi |
| bodhicitta as abiding | gnas pa byang chub kyi sems | |
| bodhicitta as application | 'jug pa'i byang chub kyi sems | prasthāna bodhicitta |
| bodhicitta as aspiration | smon pa'i byang chub kyi sems | prañidhāna bodhicitta |
| bodhicitta as consummation | mthar phyin pa byang chub kyi sems | |
| bodhicitta as directed resolve | gyo ldang byang chub kyi sems | |
| bringer of darkness | mun can | tamasvat |
| bubbles on water | chu bur | buḍbuḍa |
| calm abiding | zhi gnas | śamatha |
| cannot be found to exist | ma grub pa | asiddha |
| causal meditative absorption | rgyu'i ting nge 'dzin | |
| cause-based approach | rgyu'i theg pa | hetuyāna |
| central channel | rtsa dbu ma | avadhūti |
| cessation | 'gog pa | nirodha |
| cessation of perception and sensation | 'du shes dang tshor ba 'gog pa | |
| chain formation | lu gu rgyud | |
| changing one's form, activity of | gzugs yongs su brje ba'i las | |
| Charnel Ground | dur khrod | śamśāna |
| city of the gandharvas | dri za'i grong khyer | gandharva nagara |

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| Cloud of Dharma | chos kyi sprin | dharma megha |
| cognitive obscurations | shes bya'i sgrib pa | jñeyāvaraṇa |
| coming together | tshogs pa | saṃgata |
| committed phase of
dedicated interest | mos pa'i mos pa | |
| common states of
spiritual attainment | thun mong gi dngos grub | sadhāraṇa siddhi |
| compassion | snying rje | karuṇa |
| complete attainment | nyer thob | |
| complete liberation | rnam thar | vimokṣa |
| completely perceiving
what is positive, level of | dkar po rnam par
mthong ba'i sa | |
| completely perfect
buddhahood, levels
associated with | yang dag par rdzogs
pa'i sangs rgyas kyi sa | samyak sambuddha
bhūmi |
| completely refined state
of enlightenment | rnam byang | vaivadānika |
| component of
complete freedom | rnam par grol
ba'i phung po | vimokṣa skandha |
| component of discipline | tshul khirms kyi phūng po | śīla skandha |
| component of
meditative absorption | ting nge 'dzin gyi
phung po | samādhi skandha |
| component of
perception | skye mched | āyatana |
| component of sublime
intelligence | shes rab kyi phung po | jñāna skandha |
| component of the
vision that is the
utterly liberated state
of timeless awareness | rnam par grol ba'i ye shes
gzigs pa'i phung po | |

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| compulsion | sred pa | trṣṇa |
| conceptual | rtog bcas | savitarka |
| conceptual consciousness | rnam par shes pa | vijñāna |
| conceptual mind | yid kyi rnam par shes pa | manovijñāna |
| conceptual elaboration | spros pa | prapañca |
| conceptual framework | dmigs pa | ālambana |
| concomitant with the perfect richness of being | longs spyod rdzogs pa dang 'brel ba | |
| conditioned existence | srid pa | bhāva |
| conduct | spyod pa | carya |
| conduct based on faith and diligence | dad brtson gyi spyod pa | |
| conduct free of the passions | chags bral gyi spyod pa | |
| conduct in accord with skillful means | thabs dang mthun pa'i spyod pa | |
| conduct in accord with sublime intelligence | shes rab dang mthun pa'i spyod pa | |
| conduct of a beginning practitioner | las dang po pa'i spyod pa | |
| conduct of a glorious regent | dpal ldan rgyal tshab kyi spyod pa | |
| conduct of a youthful monarch | rgyal po gzhon nu'i spyod pa | |
| conduct of complete nobility | kun bzang gi spyod pa | |
| conduct of desire and passion | 'dod chags kyi spyod pa | |

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| conduct of pure awareness | rig pa'i spyod pa | |
| conduct of pursuing the path of spiritual deportment | brtul zhugs lam
slong gi spyod pa | |
| conduct of total victory in all ways | phyogs las rnam
rgyal gyi spyod pa | |
| conduct that brings mastery of the phenomenal world | snang ba dbang sgyur
gyi spyod pa | |
| conduct that delineates the gap between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa | 'khor 'das ru shan
'byed pa'i spyod pa | |
| conduct that involves miraculous powers | rdzu 'phrul gyi spyod pa | |
| conduct that is focused on one point | phyogs gcig pa'i spyod pa | |
| conduct that is involved with elaboration | spros pa dang bcas
pa'i spyod pa | |
| congruent cause | skal mnyam gyi rgyu | sambhāga hetu |
| consciousness, aggregate of | rnam shes kyi phung po | vijñāna skandha |
| consciousness as the basis of all ordinary experience | kun gzhi'i rnam
par shes pa | ālayavijñāna |
| consciousness as the coordinating mental faculty | yid kyi rnam par shes pa | manovijñāna |
| consecrating one's own body | bdag byin rlabs | |
| consolidation | sor sdud | pratyāhāra |
| consort of activity | las kyi phyag rgya | karma mudrā |

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| consort of awareness | rig ma | vidyā mudrā |
| consort who embodies sublime intelligence | shes rab ma | prajñā mudrā |
| consort who embodies timeless awareness | ye shes kyi phyag rgya | jñāna mudrā |
| constancy | rtag pa | nitya |
| consummate qualities of basic space | dbyings kyi yon tan mthar phyin pa | |
| consummate state ensuring all that is wished for | 'dod dgur sgyur mtha' can | |
| contact | reg pa | sparśa |
| continuity | rgyun mi chad pa | avicchinna |
| continuity of training, level of | bslab pa rgyun gyi sa | |
| continuum | rgyud | tantra |
| continuum of the inexhaustible adornment of being | mi zad pa rgyan gyi 'khor lo | |
| corruptible | zag bcas | āsrāvin |
| corruptible path of meditation | zag bcas sgom lam | āsrāvin bhāvanā mārṅa |
| courage | dpa' ba | vīra |
| courageous mind | sems dpa' | sattva |
| cutting through seeming solidity | khregs chod | |
| dance of the buddhas | sangs rgyas kyi gar | |
| day | zhag | |

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| deafening activity | 'on par 'gyur pa'i las | |
| decisive phase of decisiveness | chod pa'i chod pa | |
| decisive phase of dedicated interest | mos pa'i chod pa | |
| decisive phase of engagement | 'jug pa'i chod pa | |
| decisive phase of transformation | sgyur ba'i chod pa | |
| dedicated intent | mos pa | adhimukti |
| dedicated phase of decisiveness | chod pa'i mos pa | |
| dedicated phase of dedicated interest | mos pa'i mos pa | |
| dedicated phase of engagement | 'jug pa'i mos pa | |
| dedicated phase of transformation | sgyur ba'i mos pa | |
| deeper insight | lhag mthong | vipaśyanā |
| deeply ingrained afflictive states | kun nas nyon mongs pa | saṃkliṣṭa |
| definitive excellence | nges legs | niḥśreyasa |
| deity yoga | lha'i rnal 'byor | devatā yoga |
| delineator | rnam par bcad pa | vyavaccheda(ka) |
| Dense Array | stug po bkod pa | ghanavyūha |
| desire | 'dod chags | rāga |
| dialectical approach | mtshan nyid kyi theg pa | lakṣaṇa yāna |
| diligence | brtson 'grus | vīrya |

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| dimension of being
enjoying its own richness | longs spyod
rdzogs pa'i sku | sambhogakāya |
| dimension of
emanated form | sprul pa'i sku | nirmāṇakāya |
| dimension of
enlightened being | sku | kāya |
| dimension of
immutable being | rdo rje'i sku | vajrakāya |
| dimension of manifest
enlightenment | mngon par byang
chub kyi sku | abhisambodhikāya |
| dimension of the actual
nature of phenomena | chos kyi sku | dharma-kāya |
| direct cause | dngos rgyu | sākṣātkarāṇa |
| direct experience | mngon sum | pratyakṣa |
| direct experience
of the actual nature
of phenomena | chos nyid mngon sum | |
| direct perception
through reflexive
awareness | rang rig mngon sum | svasaṃvedana pratyakṣa |
| direct realization | mngon sum rtogs pa | |
| discerning timeless
awareness | so sor rtog pa'i ye shes | pratyavekṣanā jñāna |
| discipline | tshul khrims | śīla |
| disengagement | bral ba | visaṃyoga |
| destabilizing
obscurations | 'dzag pa'i sgrib pa | |
| dissolution of conceptual
mind and subtle energy | yid rlung thim pa | |

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| distinctive aspect of the actual stage (of meditative stability) | dnngos gzhi khyad par can | viśeṣaka vastu |
| distinctness, level of | ma 'dres pa'i sa | āveṇika bhūmi |
| distorting influences | dri ma | mala |
| divestment | bral ba | visaṃyoga |
| divine eye | lha'i spyan | devayaṃ cakṣu |
| divine hearing | lha'i rna na | devayaṃ śrota |
| Domain | zhing | kṣetra |
| doubt | the tshom | saṃśaya |
| dream image | rmi lam | svapna |
| dualistic perceptions | gzung 'dzin | grāhyāgrāhyaka |
| Early Translation School | snga 'gyur | |
| echo | brag cha | pratiśrutkā |
| eight analogies for illusoriness | sgyu ma'i dpe brgyad | aṣṭa māyopamā |
| eight avenues of ordinary consciousness | rnam shes tshogs brgyad | aṣṭa vijñānakāya |
| eight enlightened qualities | yon tan brgyad | aṣṭa guṇa |
| eight experiential qualities | ro myang brgyad | aṣṭa āsvāda |
| eight great lineages of spiritual accomplishment | sgrub brgyud shing rta chen po brgyad | |
| eight kinds of erroneous and mundane thought patterns | 'jig rten gyi phyin ci log gi rnam rtog brgyad | |

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| eight major siddhis | dngos grub chen
po brgyad | aṣṭa mahāsiddhi |
| eight modes of
complete liberation | rnam par thar pa brgyad | aṣṭa vimokṣa |
| eight modes of
dissolution | thim lugs brgyad | |
| eight mundane values | 'jig rten chos brgyad | aṣṭa lokadharmā |
| eight qualities of
powerful mastery | dbang phyug brgyad | aṣṭeśvarya |
| eight sense fields
that eclipse ordinary
perceptions | zil gyis gnon pa'i skye
mched brgyad | aṣṭābhibhava |
| eight supremely blissful
experiential qualities | bde chen ro brgyad | aṣṭa mahāsukhāsvāda |
| eighteen distinctive
qualities | ma 'dres pa bco brgyad | aṣṭadaśāveṇika |
| eightfold path of
noble ones | 'phags lam yang
lag brgyad | aṣṭārya mārga |
| eighth, level of the | brgyad pa'i sa | aṣṭamaka bhūmi |
| eighty usual overt
patterns of thought | rang bzhin brgyad
cu'i rtog pa | |
| elaborate | spros bcas | prapañca |
| elimination | spong ba | prahāṇa |
| emerging from the
ground of being | gzhi las 'phags pa | |
| emotionally affected
consciousness | nyon mongs pa can gyi
yid kyi rnam par shes pa | kliṣṭa manovijñāna |
| empowerment into
sublime intelligence
and timeless awareness | shes rab ye shes kyi dbang | prajñā jñāna abhiṣeka |

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| empowerment of the great master | slob dpon chen po'i dbang | mahācārya abhiṣeka |
| empowerment that matures | smin byed kyi dbang | |
| emptiness | stong pa nyid | śūnyatā |
| emptiness endowed with the most sublime of all attributes | rnam pa'i mchog thams cad dang ldan pa'i stong pa nyid | |
| emptiness that entails all possibilities | rnam pa kun ldan gyi stong pa nyid | sarvākarañātā śūnyatā |
| empty | stong pa | śūnya |
| Enacting the Activity of Buddhahood, level of | sangs rgyas kyi las byed pa'i sa | |
| Endowed with Metaphor | dpe ldan gyi sa | |
| endowment with power | dbang ldan | |
| engagement through firm conviction | mos spyod kyi sa | adhimukti cārya bhūmi |
| engagement with dedicated intent, level of | mos pas spyod pa'i sa | adhimukti cārya bhūmi |
| enhancement | 'bogs 'don | |
| enjoyment of space | mkha' spyod | khecara |
| enjoyment of the richness of being | longs spyod rdzogs pa | sambhoga |
| enlightened activity | phrin las | karma |
| enlightened embodiment of timeless awareness | ye shes kyi sku | jñānakāya |
| enlightened intent | dgongs pa | abhiprāya |

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| enlightened mind
as a supreme
nonconceptual state | mi rtog chen po'i thugs | |
| enlightened mind
as a supreme state
of equalness | mnyam pa chen po'i thugs | |
| enlightened mind as
manifest enlightenment
knowing anything
whatsoever | mngon byang gis cir yang
sa ler mkhyen pa'i thugs | |
| enlightened mind as the
indivisible vajra state | mi phyed rdo rje'i thugs | |
| enlightened mind
that liberates beings | 'gro ba sgrol ba'i thugs | |
| enlightened perspective
of total freedom | rnam grol gzig pa | |
| enlightened speech as
manifest enlightenment | mngon byang gi gsung | |
| enlightened speech as
the symbolic expression
of enlightened intent | dgongs pa brda'i gsung | |
| enlightened speech
as the ultimate
unborn nature | skye med don gyi gsung | |
| enlightened speech as
the utterance of words | brjod pa tshig gi gsung | |
| enlightened speech
as the vajra state of
inseparability | dbyer med rdo rje'i gsung | |
| enriching activity | rgyas pa'i las | |
| enrichment of
meditative experience | nyams snang gong 'phel | |
| ensuring benefit | don byed pa | arthakriyā |

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| Ensuring Total Realization of the Metaphor of All Metaphors, level of | dpe thams cad kyi dpe rab tu rtogs par byed pa'i sa | |
| entirely sufficient preparatory phase | nyer bsdogs mi lcogs med | anāgamyā sāmāntaka |
| equal taste | ro snyoms | samarasa |
| equality | mnyam pa nyid | śamatā |
| equipoise of cessation | 'gog pa'i snyoms 'jug | nīrodha samāpatti |
| equivalent cause | skal mnyam gyi rgyu | sabhāga hetu |
| establishing a distinction | bye brag phyed pa | |
| even | mnyam pa nyid | śamatā |
| ever-present | rtag pa | nitya |
| exceptional joy | khyad par gyi dga' ba | viśeṣa muditā |
| exercise of mastery | dbang po nyid | |
| exercising miraculous powers, level of | rdzu 'phrul 'phrul ba'i sa | |
| expedient cause | nye rgyu | upakāraṇa |
| explanatory commentary | lung | āgama |
| external aspects of manifest enlightenment | phyi'i mgon byang | bāhaya abhisambodhi |
| extreme clarity | rab tu gsal ba | prakāśa |
| extreme magnitude | shin tu che ba | sumahat |
| extreme subtlety | shin tu phra ba | sūkṣmatama |
| extremely empty | shin tu stong pa | |
| extremely precise analysis of phenomena | chos rab rnam 'byed | dharma pravacaya |

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| extremely unelaborate | shin tu spros med | sunīṣprapañca |
| extremely unelaborate
mode of conduct | shin tu spros med
kyi spyod pa | sunīṣprapañca carya |
| eye of phenomena | chos kyi spyān | dharma cakṣu |
| eye of sublime
intelligence | shes rab kyi spyān | prajñā cakṣu |
| eye of timeless awareness | ye shes kyi spyān | jñāna cakṣu |
| factor to be eliminated | spang bya | pariheya |
| factors that contribute
to enlightenment | byang chub phyogs
kyi chos | bodhipakṣa dharma |
| faculty endowed with
all-knowing awareness | kun shes ldan
pa'i dbang po | |
| faculty of all-knowing
awareness | kun shes pa'i dbang po | |
| faculty that brings all-
knowing awareness | kun shes byed
pa'i dbang po | |
| faith, level of | dad pa'i sa | śraddhā bhūmi |
| faith based on a
desire to emulate | 'dod pa'i dad pa | |
| faith based on awe | dang ba'i dad pa | |
| faith based on trust | yid ches pa'i dad pa | |
| family type | rigs | gotra |
| father tantra | pha('i) rgyud | pitṛ tantra |
| fearlessness in
consummate realization | rtogs pa phun tshogs
la mi 'jigs pa | |
| fearlessness in
consummate
renunciation | spangs pa phun
tshogs la mi 'jigs pa | |

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| fearlessness in declaring which factors obstruct the spiritual path | bar du gcod pa'i chos bstan pa la mi 'jigs pa | |
| fearlessness in proclaiming the path of the will to be free | nges par 'byung ba'i lam bstan pa la mi 'jigs pa | |
| feminine energy | rdul | rajas |
| ferocity | drag shul | raudra |
| five aspects of excellence | phun tshogs lnga | pañca sampanna |
| five aspects of timeless awareness | ye shes lnga | pañca jñāna |
| five controlling powers associated with the completely refined state of enlightenment | rnam byang dbang po lnga | pañca vaivadānikendriya |
| five deeper levels of insight | spyang lnga | pañca cakṣu |
| five factors contributing to manifest enlightenment | mngon byang lnga | pañcābhisambodhi |
| five governing powers | dbang po lnga | pañcendriya |
| five incorruptible components | zag med kyi phung po lnga | pañcānastrava skandha |
| five levels of deeper discernment | mngon shes lnga | pañcābhijña |
| five mind-body aggregates | phung po lnga | pañca skandha |
| five paths | lam lnga | pañca mārga |
| five states of fear | 'jigs pa lnga | pañcābhaya |
| five strengths | stobs lnga | pañca bala |

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| five strengths associated with the completely refined state of enlightenment | rnam byang stobs lnga | pañca bala abhisambodhi |
| five yogic phases | rnal 'byor lnga | pañca yoga |
| fivefold certainty | nges pa lnga | pañca niyata |
| flash of lightning | glog | aśani |
| fleetness of foot | rkang mgyogs | jaṅghākārika |
| flesh-and-blood eye | sha'i spyan | māṃsa cakṣu |
| forbearance | bzod pa | kṣānti |
| forceful application | sdig sbyor | |
| forceful intervention | mngon spyod | abhicāra |
| foremost and supreme master of generosity | sbyin bdag chen
po gtso bo | |
| form endowed with the potential for all manifestations | rnam pa thams
cad pa'i gzugs | |
| form vajra | sku rdo rje | kāya vajra |
| formation of the mind-body complex | ming gzugs | nāmarūpa |
| formative factors, aggregate of | 'du byed kyi phung po | saṃskāra skandha |
| formative patterning | 'du byed pa | saṃskāra |
| forms, aggregate of | gzugs kyi phung po | rūpa skandha |
| foundation of incorruptible virtue | zag pa med pa'i dge rtsa | anāsrava kuśala mūla |
| four actual stages of meditative stability | bsam gtan sa dngos bzhi | catvāri dhyāna bhūmi |

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| four applications of mindfulness | dran pa nye bar
bzhag pa bzhi | catvāri smṛtyūpasthāna |
| four ascending gradations of joy | mas brtan gyi dga' ba bzhi | |
| four aspects of complete purity | yongs su dag pa bzhi | catvāri pariśuddha |
| four aspects of correct renunciation | yang dag par
spong ba bzhi | catvāri samyak prahāṇa |
| four aspects of timeless awareness | ye shes bzhi | catvāri jñāna |
| four avenues of total recall | gzungs kyi sgo bzhi | catvāri dhāraṇidvara |
| four bases of supernatural powers | rdzu 'phrul gyi
rkang pa bzhi | catvāri ṛddhipāda |
| four branches of approach and accomplishment | bsnyen sgrub kyi
yan lag bzhi | catvāri sevā sādhanāṅga |
| four deadening influences | bdud bzhi | catvāraḥ māra |
| four degrees of emptiness | stong pa bzhi | catvāri śūnyatā |
| four descending gradations of joy | yas babs kyi dga' ba bzhi | |
| four erroneous perceptions concerning seeming identity | bdag tu 'dzin pa'i
phyin ci log bzhi | |
| Four Great Kings | gyal chen sde bzhi | catvāraḥ mahārāja kāyika |
| four immeasurable attitudes | tshad med bzhi | catvāri pramāṇa |
| four kinds of enlightened activity | phrin las bzhi | catvāri samudācāra |
| four kinds of erroneous opinions | phyin ci log pa bzhi | catvāraḥ viparyaya |

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| four kinds of spiritual miracles | cho 'phrul bzhi | catvāri ṛddhi |
| four levels of a master of awareness | rig 'dzin bzhi | catvāraḥ vidyādhara |
| four means of gathering students | bsdu ba'i dngos po bzhi | catvāri saṃgrahavastu |
| four states of authentic discernment | so so yang dag par rig pa bzhi | catvāri pratisaṃvid |
| four states of fearlessness | 'jigs med bzhi | catvāra (a)bhaya |
| Four Truths of noble ones | 'phags pa'i bden pa bzhi | catvāra ārya satya |
| four visions | snang ba bzhi | |
| fourfold independence | ltos med bzhi ldan | |
| fourfold timeless awareness | ye shes bzhi sbyor | |
| fourth empowerment | dbang bzhi pa | caturthābhiṣeka |
| framework that ushers in the fruition state, level of | dmigs pa 'bras bu skye ba'i sa | |
| free of distortion | dri ma dang bral ba | nirmala |
| free of elaboration | spros pa dang bral ba | niḥprapañca |
| freedom from attachment, level of | chags bral gyi sa | |
| freedom from desire and attachment, levels of | 'dod chags dang bral ba'i sa | |
| fresh | so ma | |
| fruition | 'bras bu | phala |
| fruition aspect of tantra | 'bras bu'i rgyud | phala tantra |

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| fruition of the vajra holder | 'bras bu rdo rje 'dzin pa | |
| fruition-based approach | 'bras bu'i theg pa | phalayāna |
| fully ordained monk who is a vajra holder | gsum ldan rdo rje 'dzin pa | treta vajradhṛk |
| fundamentally positive factors | dge ba'i rtsa ba | kuśala mūla |
| fundamentally positive factors that are still volatile | gyo ba'i dge ba'i rtsa ba | |
| gaṇacakra ritual | tshogs kyi 'khor lo | gaṇacakra |
| gathering | 'du ba | |
| gathering of friends | mdza' ba 'dus pa | |
| generosity | sbyin pa | dāna |
| genuine | gnyug ma | |
| genuine body | gnyug ma'i lus | nivāsita kāya |
| Glorious Wheel of Time | dpal dus kyi 'khor lo | śrī kālacakra |
| Gods Free of Conflict | 'thab bral | yāma |
| Gods Less Than Great | mi che ba | avraha |
| Gods Not Subject to Affliction | mi gdung ba | atāpa |
| Gods Who Enjoy Emanations | 'phrul dga' | nirmāṇarati |
| Gods Who Enjoy the Emanations of Others | gzhan 'phrul dbang byed | arinirmita vaśavartin |
| Gods with Great Insight | shin tu mthong ba | sudṛṣa |
| Gods with Ideal Insight | gya nom snang ba | sudarśana |

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| governance | bdag po gyur pa | īśatva |
| governing condition | bdag po'i rkyen | adhipati pratyaya |
| gradual dissolution | rjes su gzhig pa | |
| great compassion | thugs rje chen po | mahākaruṇa |
| Great Perfection
approach of
utter lucidity | 'od gsal rdzogs pa chen po | |
| ground of being | gzhi | vastu |
| habitual patterns | bag chags | vāsanā |
| habitual patterns of
change associated with
the three successive steps
of subtle experience | snang gsum 'pho
ba'i bag chags | |
| habitual patterns of
karma functioning as
conditioning factors | rkyen 'gyur las
kyi bag chags | |
| habitual patterns
that account for
overt behavior | mgnon tu rgyu
ba'i bags chags | |
| hallucination | mig 'khrul | indrajāla |
| harnessing and
channeling subtle energy | srog rtsol | prāṇāyāma |
| herald (consort) | pho nya mo | dūtī |
| heralds born of mantra | sngags skyes kyi
pho nya mo | |
| hermaphrodite | ma ning | napuṃsaka |
| heroes' banquet | dpa' bo'i ston mo | vīra yātrā |
| heroines' banquet | dpa' mo'i ston mo | vīriṇī yātrā |
| hidden meaning | sbas don | |

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| higher states of realization | mngon par rtogs pa | abhisamaya |
| higher training in discipline | lhag pa'i tshul khrims kyi bslab pa | ādhiśīla śikṣā |
| higher training in mind | lhag pa'i sems kyi bslab pa | ādhisamādhi śikṣā |
| higher training in sublime intelligence | lhag pa'i shes rab kyi | ādhiprajñā śikṣā |
| highest mundane experience | 'jig rten chos mchog | laukikāgradharma |
| holding erroneous philosophical opinions | log par lta ba | mithyā dṛṣṭi |
| holding the transitory mind-body aggregates to constitute something real | 'jigs tshogs la lta ba | satkāya dṛṣṭi |
| holding to philosophical absolutes | lta ba mchog 'dzin | dṛṣṭi prāmarśa |
| holistic sphere | thig le | bindu |
| idealist philosopher | rnam rig pa | vijñāptivādin |
| ideological fixation | lta ba | darśana |
| ignorance | ma rig pa | avidyā |
| Illuminating One | 'od byed pa | prabhākari |
| illusionist's trick | sgyu ma | māyā |
| illusory body | sgyu lus | māyākāya |
| immaculacy | gtsang ma/dri ma med pa | śuddha/vimala |
| immaculate abodes | gtsang ma'i gnas | śuddhāvāsa |
| immaculate meditative absorption | dri med pa'i ting nge 'dzin | vimala samādhi |
| Immaculate One | dri ma med pa | vimalā |

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| immeasurable mansion | gzhal yas khang | vimāna |
| immediate cause | nye ba'i rgyu | upākarāṇa |
| immensity | dpag med | amita |
| immersion in analytical discernment | 'byed pa'i rnal 'byor | |
| immersion in conceptual elaboration | spros pa'i rnal 'byor | prapañca yoga |
| immersion in genuine action | bya ba'i rnal 'byor | kriyā yoga |
| immersion in genuine being | rnal 'byor | yoga |
| immersion in genuine being, level of | rnal 'byor gyi sa | yoga bhūmi |
| immersion in genuine certainty of one's natural state | rang sa nges pa'i rnal 'byor | |
| immersion in genuine conduct | spyod pa'i rnal 'byor | carya yoga |
| immersion in genuine transformation | sgyur ba'i rnal 'byor | |
| immersion in perfect freedom from anything needing to be done | rang sa nges pa'i rnal 'byor | |
| immersion in realization | rtogs pa'i rnal 'byor | |
| Immutable One | mi .gyo ba | acalā |
| impartiality | btang snyoms | upekṣā |
| improvement of stability | brtan pa khyad
par du 'gro ba | |
| impure illusory body | ma dag pa'i sgyu lus | aśuddha māyākāya |

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| imputed existence of the individual | skyes bu btags yod | puruṣa prajñaptisat |
| inborn afflictive states | lhan skyes kyi
nyon mongs pa | sahaja kleśa |
| inborn latent potential | bag la nyal ba | anuśaya |
| inborn sense of individual selfhood | lhan skyes kyi bdag | sahajātma |
| Incomparable, level of | dpe med kyi sa | anupama bhūmi |
| Incomparable One | dpe med pa | anupama |
| Incomparable Timeless Awareness | dpe med ye shes | anupama jñāna |
| inconceivable | bsam gyis mi khyab pa | acintya |
| incorruptibility | sra ba | kāṭhina |
| incorruptible | zag med | anāsrāvin |
| incorruptible virtue | zag med kyi dge ba | anāsrava kuśala |
| incorruptible ways of knowing | zag pa med pa'i
mkhyen tshul | |
| increase | mched pa | |
| indestructibility | mi shigs pa | avināśin |
| indirect result | brgyud kyi 'bras bu | |
| individual | gang zag | puḍgala |
| individual liberation | so sor thar pa | pratimokṣa |
| individual self-knowing timeless awareness | so so rang rig pa'i ye shes | pratisaṃvid jñāna |
| indivisible | mi phyed pa | abheda |
| ineffable | brjod du med pa | |

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| inexhaustibility | 'dzag pa med pa | anāśravanti |
| infinite array of innate purity | dag pa rab 'byams | |
| Infinite Consciousness | rnam shes mtha' yas | vijñānānantya |
| Infinite Space | nam mkha' mtha' yas | ākāśānantya |
| initial arousal of transcendent mind | 'jig rten las 'das pa'i sems dang por bskyed pa | |
| initial entrance | zhugs pa | āpanna |
| initial entrance into the fruition state of a nonreturner | phyir mi 'ong ba'i 'bras bu la zhugs pa | anāgāmiphala pratipanna |
| initial entrance into the fruition state of a once-returner | phyir 'ong ba'i 'bras bu la zhugs pa | āgāmiphala pratipanna |
| initial entrance into the fruition state of a stream-winner | rgyun du zhugs pa'i 'bras bu la zhugs pa | srotāpannaphala pratipanna |
| initial entrance into the fruition state of an arhat | dgra bcom pa'i 'bras bu la zhugs pa | arhatphala pratipanna |
| innate awareness in the context of the path | lam dus kyi lhan skyes | |
| innate experience of supreme bliss | lhan skyes bde ba chen po | sahaja mahāsukha |
| innate joy | lhan skyes kyi dga' ba | sahaja muditā |
| innateness | lhan skyes | sahaja |
| Inner Charnel Ground | nye ba'i dur khrod | |
| Inner Domain | nye ba'i zhing | |
| Inner Gathering | nye ba'i 'du ba | |
| Inner Intent | nye ba'i tsandho | |

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| Inner Quenching of Thirst | nya ba'i 'thung spyod/gcod | |
| inseparability, state of | dbyer med pa | asambheda |
| inseparability of symbol and meaning, level of | brda' don dbyer med kyi sa | |
| inspiration | yid dang ba | |
| instant that is the smallest instant of time | dus mtha'i skad cig ma | kalpānta kṣaṇa |
| instant that is the time needed to complete some function | bya ba rdzogs pa'i skad cig ma | |
| instantaneous collapse | ril por 'dzin pa | |
| instinctive feelings | lhan skyes | sahaja |
| instructions that liberate | grol byed kyi khrid | |
| intangible | rnam par med pa | nirākāra |
| integrate with, to | rgyas 'debs pa | |
| integration | kha sbyor | sambhukta |
| Intent | tshandho | candha |
| intent and involvement | 'dod 'jug | |
| intention | 'dun pa | chanda |
| interdependent origination | rten (cing) 'brel (ba) | pratītyasamutpāda |
| intermediate state | bar do | antarā bhāva |
| intermediate state of becoming | srid pa bar do | bhāvāntarā bhāva |
| intermediate state of the true nature of reality | chos nyid bar do | dharma-tāntarā bhāva |

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| invincibility | ma pham pa | ajita |
| invisible | bstan du med pa | |
| invoking timeless awareness | ye shes dbab pa | |
| involved phase of decisiveness | chod pa'i 'jug pa | |
| involved phase of dedicated interest | mos pa'i 'jug pa | |
| involved phase of engagement | 'jug pa'i 'jug pa | |
| involved phase of transformation | sgyur ba'i 'jug pa | |
| involvement | 'jug pa | prasthāna |
| involving no ordinary perception | snang med | nirābhāsa |
| invulnerability | mi chod pa | |
| irreversible faith | phyir mi ldog pa'i dad pa | |
| isolation of mind | sems dben pa | citta vivikta |
| Jewel Light, Abiding as the Actual Conferral of Empowerment, level of | rin chen 'od mgnon
par dbang bskur ba
la gnas pa'i sa | |
| joy | dga' ba | muditā |
| joy beyond joy | dga' bral | |
| Joyous Realm | dga' ldan | tuṣita |
| karmic obscurations | las kyi sgrib pa | karmāvaraṇa |
| kāya of innate presence | lhan cig skyes pa'i sku | sahajakāya |
| kāya of manifest enlightenment | mgnon par byang
chub pa'i sku | abhisambodhikāya |

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| kāya of timeless awareness | ye shes kyi sku | jñānakāya |
| knowing reality just as it is | ji lta ba mkhyen pa | yathā bhūta parijñāna |
| knowing things in all their multiplicity | ji snyed pa mkhyen pa | yathāvad vyavasthāna parijñāna |
| knowledge of other's minds | pha rol gyi sems shes pa | paracitta jñāna |
| knowledge of relative reality | kun rdzob shes pa | saṃvṛti jñāna |
| knowledge of suffering | sdug bsngal shes pa | duḥkha jñāna |
| knowledge of the all-pervasive origin of suffering | kun 'byung shes pa | samudaya jñāna |
| knowledge of the cessation of suffering | 'gog pa shes pa | nirodha jñāna |
| knowledge of the different states of others' minds | sems kyi rnam grangs shes pa | |
| knowledge of the exhaustion of all negative factors | zag pa zad pa shes pa | āsrava kṣaya jñāna |
| knowledge of the Four Truths | bden bzhi shes pa | catvāri āryasatya jñāna |
| knowledge of the spiritual path | lam shes pa | mārga jñāna |
| knowledge of the unborn quality of things | mi skye ba shes pa | anutpāda jñāna |
| lack of identity | bdag med | anātman |
| lack of identity in phenomena | chos kyi bdag med | dharma nairātma |

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| lack of identity in the individual personality | gang zag gi bdag med | pudgala nairātma |
| lalanā (lateral channel) | rkyang ma | lalanā |
| latent tendency | bag la nyal ba | anuśaya |
| lesser spiritual attainments | dngos grub dman pa | |
| level of abiding without change | gnas pa mi 'gyur ba'i sa | |
| level of buddhahood awakened in every respect, emptiness free of all elaboration | spros pa kun bral ba'i
stong nyid rnam pa thams
cad du sangs rgyas pa'i sa | |
| level of continuity of training | bslab pa rgyun gyi sa | |
| level of refining away major obscurations | gal chen sbyong ba'i sa | |
| level of the basis of reliance | brten pa zhi'i sa | |
| level of the framework that ushers in the fruition state | dmigs pa 'bras bu
skye ba'i sa | |
| level of the improvement of stability | brtan pa khyad par
du 'gro ba'i sa | |
| level of the meritorious basis | bsod nams rten gyi sa | |
| level of the permeation of the actual nature of phenomena | gdal ba chos nyid kyi sa | |
| level of the universal range of perfection | rdzogs pa spyi chibs kyi sa | |
| level of unpredictable change | 'gyur ba ma nges pa'i sa | |

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| Light of Nectar, the
Clear Light of the
Supreme Moon Light
of Space, level of | bdud rtsi 'od zla ba
chen po 'od gsal ba'i sa | |
| Light of Space,
Abiding Totally Like
Space, level of | nam mkha'i 'od
nam mkha' ltar rab
tu gnas pa'i sa | |
| lightness | yang ba | |
| lightness to the touch | reg yang ba | |
| lion throne | seng ge'i khri | |
| livelihood | 'tsho ba | ajiva |
| Lord of Secrets | gsang ba'i bdag po | guhyapati |
| Lotus Light, Completely
Upholding the Flawless
State Pure by Its Very
Nature, level of | padma'i 'od rang
bzhin gyis dag pa'i
chos dri ma med pa
yongs su 'dzin pa'i sa | |
| Lotus-Bearer | padma can | padmaka |
| Lotus-Bearing
One, level of | ma chags padma
can gyi sa | vairāga padmaka bhūmi |
| love | byams pa | maitri |
| mad yogic practitioner's
conduct | smyon pa'i spyod pa | unmatta carya |
| magnetizing activity | dbang gi las | |
| maidens' feast | gzhon nu ma'i ston mo | |
| majestic lion | seng ge rnam bsgyings | |
| major marks of perfect
form, thirty-two | mtshan bzang po so gnyis | dvātriṃśadvāra lakṣaṇa |
| manifest enlightenment | mngon byang | abhisambodhi |
| manifest enlightenment
through emptiness | stong pa nyid las
byang chub pa | |

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| manifest enlightenment
through the lunar energy | zla ba las byang chub pa | |
| manifest enlightenment
through the solar energy | nyi ma las byang chub pa | |
| manifest enlightenment
through the
symbolic emblem | phyag mtshan las
byang chub pa | |
| manifest enlightenment
through the totality
of the kāyas | sku yongs rdzogs las
byang chub pa | |
| manifest mode | snang tshul | |
| manifest onset, level of | mngon par 'byung ba'i sa | |
| manifest timeless
awareness | snang ba'i ye shes | |
| manifestation | snang ba | ābhāsa |
| manifesting within
its own true nature | rang ngor snang ba | |
| manifesting within the
perception of someone
else's consciousness | gzhan gyi rnam
rig la snang ba | |
| māra of afflictive
mental states | nyon mongs pa'i bdud | kleśa māra |
| māra of the gods' child | lha'i bu'i bdud | devaputra māra |
| māra of the Lord
of Death | 'chi bdag gi bdud | mṛtyu māra |
| māra of the mind-
body aggregates | phung po'i bdud | skandha māra |
| masculine energy | khu ba | rasa |
| master of awareness | rig pa 'dzin pa | vidyādhara |
| master of awareness
in a physical body | lus kyi rig 'dzin | kāya vidyādhara |

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| master of awareness in the realm of desire | 'dod pa'i rig 'dzin | kāmadhātu vidyādhara |
| master of awareness of the jewel | rin po che'i rig 'dzin | ratna vidyādhara |
| master of awareness of the lotus | padma'i rig 'dzin | padma vidyādhara |
| master of awareness of the sword | ral gri'i rig 'dzin | khadga vidyādhara |
| master of awareness of the vajra | rdo rje'i rig 'dzin | vajra vidyādhara |
| master of awareness of the wheel | 'khor lo'i rig 'dzin | cakra vidyādhara |
| master of awareness still subject to the complete maturation of karma | rnam smin gyi rig 'dzin | vipāka vidyādhara |
| master of awareness through material means | rdzas kyi rig 'dzin | dravya vidyādhara |
| master of awareness with power over longevity | tshe dbang rig 'dzin | āyurvaśitā vidyādhara |
| master of mahāmudrā awareness | phyag chen rig 'dzin | mahāmudrā vidyādhara |
| master of spontaneously present awareness | lhun grub rig 'dzin | anābhoga vidyādhara |
| maturation | smin pa | pāka |
| meaning, level of | don gyi sa | artha bhūmi |
| meaningful objects of experience | don | artha |
| meditation | sgom pa | bhāvana |
| meditative absorption | ting nge 'dzin | samādhi |
| meditative absorption as a great equalizing blaze | 'bar chen mnyam pa'i ting nge 'dzin | |

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| meditative absorption as
a seal that overwhelms | phyag rgya zil gyis gnon
pa'i ting nge 'dzin | |
| meditative absorption as
manifold aspects of the
actual nature of reality | chos nyid sna tshogs
pa'i ting nge 'dzin | |
| meditative absorption
blazing with light | 'od 'bar ba'i ting nge 'dzin | |
| meditative absorption
called "the total array
that is the display of
natural manifestation" | rnam par bkod pa rang
snang rol pa zhes bya
ba'i ting nge 'dzin | |
| meditative absorption
like a mighty wheel | 'khor lo chen po'i
ting nge 'dzin | |
| meditative absorption
like bolts of lightning | glog gi phreng ba'i
ting nge 'dzin | |
| meditative absorption
like the pinnacle point
of a wish-fulfilling gem | yid bzhin gyi nor bu'i
tog gi ting nge 'dzin | |
| meditative absorption
of a majestic lion | seng ge rnam par bsgyings
pa'i ting nge 'dzin | |
| meditative absorption
of suchness | de bzhin nyid kyi
ting nge 'dzin | |
| meditative absorption
of the manifest
display of the peak
of a victory banner | rgyal mtshan gyi
rtse mo rnam par rol
pa'i ting nge 'dzin | |
| meditative absorption of
universal manifestation | kun tu snang ba'i
ting nge 'dzin | |
| meditative absorption
that brings courage | dpa' bar 'gro ba'i
ting nge 'dzin | |
| meditative equipoise | mnyam bzhag | samāhita |
| meditative stability | bsam gtan | dhyāna |
| meditative warmth | drod | uṣman |

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| melting bliss | zhu bde | |
| mental analysis | dpyod pa | vicāra |
| mental body | yid kyi lus | manaskāya |
| mental continuum | rgyud | tantra |
| mental events | sems byung | caitta |
| Merging with Genuine Awareness, the Epitome of Self-Knowing Discernment, level of | so so'i bdag nyid rig pa rnal 'byor pa'i sa | |
| meritorious basis, level of | bsod nams rten gyi sa | |
| mind | sems | citta |
| mind vajra | thugs rdo rje | citta vajra |
| mind-body aggregates | phung po | skandha |
| mindfulness | dran pa | smṛti |
| minor marks of perfect form, eighty | dpe byad bzang po brgyad cu | aśītyānuvyañjanā |
| miraculous powers | rdzu 'phrul | ṛddhi |
| mirage | smig rgyu | marīci |
| mirrorlike timeless awareness | me long lta bu'i ye shes | ādarśa jñāna |
| mirth | bzhad gad | hāsyā |
| mode of freedom | grol tshul | |
| mode of liberation associated with cessation | 'gog pa'i rnam thar | nirodha mokṣa |
| mode of liberation in beauty | sdug pa'i rnam thar | śubhaṃ vimokṣa |

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| modes of liberation in formlessness, four | gzugs med kyi
rnam thar bzhi | catvāri arūpya vimokṣa |
| mode of liberation in what has form regarding form | gzugs can gzugs la
lta ba'i rnam thar | |
| mode of liberation in what has no regarding form | gzugs med gzugs la
lta ba'i rnam thar | |
| moon free of obscuration | zla ba sgrib bral | candra nirāvaraṇa |
| most subtle habitual patterns of change | 'gyur ba'i bag
chags phra mo | |
| mother tantra | ma('i) rgyud | māṭṛ tantra |
| motile aspect of mind | sems gyo ba'i cha | |
| motivation awakening on the level of the fruition | 'bras bu'i sa nas
sems skye ba | |
| motivation awakening on the level of the ground | gzhi'i sa nas sems skye ba | |
| motivation awakening on the level of the path | lam gyi sa nas
sems skye ba | |
| mudrā consort | phyag rgya ma | mudrā |
| mundane meditation | 'jig rten pa'i sgom pa | laukika bhāvana |
| mundane path | 'jig rten pa'i lam | laukika mārḡa |
| mundane path of meditation | 'jig rten pa'i sgom lam | laukika bhāvana mārḡa |
| naïve affirmation | rtag par lta ba | śāśvata dṛṣṭi |
| natural occurrence | rang bzhin du (yod pa) | |
| naturalness | rang bzhin | svabhāva |

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| Neither Perception
Nor Nonperception | 'du shes med 'du
shes med min | neva saṃjñānāsaṃjñāna |
| nihilistic denial | chad par lta ba | uccheda dṛṣṭi |
| nine moods of dance | gar gyi nyams dgu | nava naṭakabalā |
| nine successive stages of
meditative equipoise | mthar gyis gnas pa'i
snyoms par 'jug pa dgu | navānupūrva vihāra
samāpatti |
| nirmāṇakāya of birth | skye ba sprul sku | janma nirmāṇakāya |
| nirmāṇakāya of skill | bzo ba sprul sku | silpin nirmāṇakāya |
| no dualistic framework | gnyis min | advaya |
| no independent nature | rang bzhin med pa | asvabhāva |
| nominal aspect of
the actual stage (of
meditative stability) | dngos gzhi tsam po ba | |
| nominally imputed | btags pa ba | prajñāpti |
| nonconceptual | rtog pa med pa | akalpana |
| nonconceptual
awareness | rnam par mi rtog
pa('i shes pa) | nirvikalpaka |
| nonduality | gnyis su med pa | advaya |
| nonlimited nirvāṇa | mi gnas pa'i myang 'das | |
| nonlimited state of
supreme enlightenment | mi gnas pa'i byang
chub chen po | |
| nonobjectifiable | bltar med pa | |
| nonrecognition
of awareness | ma rig pa | avidyā |
| nonreferential
compassion | dmigs pa med
pa'i snying rje | anā lambana karuṇa |
| nonreturner | phyir mi 'ong ba | anāgāmin |

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| nonsubstantial | dngos med | abhāva |
| nonthematic phase of
stage of completion | mtshan med rdzogs rim | |
| nonvacillation | gyo ba med pa | |
| not acting | mi mdzad pa | |
| not coming | mi 'ong ba | |
| not going | mi 'gro ba | |
| not insignificant | cung zad med pa | |
| not involving subject-
oriented perception | yul can ma yin pa | |
| not manifesting | mi snang ba | |
| not manifold | du ma med pa | |
| not proliferating | mi 'phro ba | |
| not relying on any
other circumstance | gzhan las ma byung ba | |
| not remaining | mi gnas pa | |
| not resolving | mi 'du ba | |
| not tangible | dngos po med pa | abhāva |
| Nothingness | ci yang med pa | na kiṃcanya |
| numbing, activity of | rmongs par 'gyur pa'i las | |
| nurturing | rjes su 'dzin pa | anugraha |
| objectionable actions | kha na ma tho ba | |
| obscuration | sgrib pa | āvaraṇa |
| obscurations to
meditative equipoise | snyoms 'jug gi sgrib pa | samāpattyāvaraṇa |

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| obvious form | gzugs rags pa | |
| offering to the goddesses
of the family | rigs ldan ma mchod pa | |
| omnipresent | kun tu 'gro ba | sarvatraḡa |
| omniscience | thams cad mkhyen pa | sarvākārajñāta |
| Omniscience Itself,
the Supreme State of
Utter Lucidity, level of | thams cad mkhyen
pa nyid 'od gsal
ba chen po'i sa | |
| once-returner | phyir 'ong ba | sakṛdāḡāmin |
| One Endowed with
Timeless Awareness | ye shes ldan | |
| One of Brilliant
Intelligence | legs pa'i blo gros | sādhumatī |
| One Who Has Gone Far | ring du song ba | dūraṡḡama |
| One Who Makes
Evident | mngon du gyur pa | abhimukhī |
| One Who Meets
the Challenge | sbyang dka' ba | sudurjaya |
| oneness | gcig pu/gcig pa | ekākin |
| one-pointed absorption
of the realm of desire | 'dod pa'i sems rtse gcig pa | |
| one's own body endowed
with skillful method | rang lus thabs ldan | |
| optical illusion | mig yor | pratibhāsa |
| ordinary consciousness | rnam par shes pa | vijñāna |
| ordinary individual | so so skye bo | pṛthagjana |
| original purity | ka (nas) dag (pa) | |
| pacifying activity | zhi ba'i las | |

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| path of accumulation | tshogs kyi lam | sambhāra mārḡa |
| path of complete freedom | rnam grol gyi lam | vimukti mārḡa |
| path of consummation | mthar phyin pa'i lam | niryāti mārḡa |
| path of distinctive features | khyad par gyi lam | viśeṣa mārḡa |
| path of linkage | sbyor ba'i lam | prayoga mārḡa |
| path of meditation | sgom pa'i lam | bhāvana mārḡa |
| path of no more training | mi slob pa'i lam | aśaikṣa mārḡa |
| path of seeing | mthong ba'i lam | darśana mārḡa |
| path of the herald | pho nya'i lam | dūti mārḡa |
| path that leads in only one direction | bgrod pa gcig pa'i lam | ekayāna mārḡa |
| pathway of complete freedom | rnam grol gyi lam | vimukti mārḡa |
| pathway without obstacles | bar chad med lam | anantara mārḡa |
| pathways of light | 'od rtse | prabhānāḍi |
| patient acceptance | bzod pa | kṣānti |
| patient acceptance producing an understanding of a phenomenon | chos shes pa'i bzod pa | dharma jñāna kṣānti |
| patient acceptance producing subsequent understanding | rjes su shes pa'i bzod pa | anvaya jñāna kṣānti |
| peak experience | rtse mo | mūrdhan/mūrti |
| perceived objects | gzung ba('i yul) | grāhya viṣaya |

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| perceiving mind | 'dzin pa'i sems | grāhaka citta |
| perceiving subject | 'dzin pa | grāhaka |
| perceptions, aggregate of | 'du shes kyi chung po | saṃjñā skandha |
| perceptual processes | skye mched | āyatana |
| perfect buddhahood | rdzogs pa'i sang rgyas | sambuddha |
| permeation of the
actual nature of
phenomena, level of | gdal ba chos nyid kyi sa | |
| perpetuation | len pa | upādāna |
| pervasiveness | khyab pa | spharaṇa |
| phases that anticipate the
decisive breakthrough | nges 'byed cha mthun | nirvedhabhāgīya |
| physical body
that is the natural
consequence of karma | rnam smin gyi lus | vipaka kāya |
| pinnacle of conditioned
existence | srid pa'i rtse mo | bhavārga |
| pinnacle pure realm | 'og min | akaniṣṭha |
| Pinnacle State of the
Realm of Form | gzugs khamis kyi 'og min | rūpa dhātvakaniṣṭha |
| pith instructions | man ngag | upadeśa |
| planting the kila dagger | phur bus gdab pa | |
| positive factors that
anticipate liberation | thar pa cha mthun
gyi dge ba | mokṣa bhāgīya kuśala |
| positive foundation that
anticipates liberation | thar pa cha mthun
pa'i dge rtsa | mokṣa bhāgīya
kuśala mūla |
| postmeditation | rjes thob | prṣṭha labdha |
| power | stobs | bala |

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| power of complete recall | gzungs kyi stobs | dhāraṇī bala |
| power of knowing all modes of being, whether those of deeply ingrained afflictive states or those of completely refined states of enlightenment | kun nas nyon mongs pa dang rnam par byang ba'i tshul mkhyen pa'i stobs | |
| power of knowing death, transition, and rebirth | 'chi 'pho dang skye ba mkhyen pa'i stobs | |
| power of knowing paths that lead to all destinies | kun tu 'gro ba'i lam mkhyen pa'i stobs | |
| power of knowing that all that is corruptible has come to an end | zhi ba zag pa zad pa mkhyen pa'i stobs | |
| power of knowing the aspirations of beings in all their variety | mos pa sna tshogs mkhyen pa'i stobs | |
| power of knowing the greater or lesser capacity of beings | dbang po mchog dman mkhyen pa'i stobs | |
| power of knowing the inevitable consequences of karma | las kyi rnam smin mkhyen pa'i stobs | |
| power of knowing the temperaments of beings in all their variety | khams sna tshogs mkhyen pa'i stobs | |
| power of knowing what is appropriate or inappropriate | gnas dang gnas min mkhyen pa'i stobs | |
| power of recalling former lifetimes | sngon gyi gnas rjes su dran pa mkhyen pa'i stobs | |
| powerful master of the eight levels | sa brgyad kyi dbang phyug | |
| powerful mastery of desired goals | 'dod pa'i dbang phyug | |

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| powerful mastery of enlightened form | sku yi dbang phyug | |
| powerful mastery of enlightened form | thugs kyi dbang phyug | |
| powerful mastery of enlightened speech | gsung gi dbang phyug | |
| powerful mastery of miraculous powers | rdzu 'phrul gyi dbang phyug | |
| powerful mastery of omnipresence | kun tu 'gro ba'i dbang phyug | |
| powerful mastery of positive influence | skyed pa'i dbang phyug | |
| powerful mastery of states of being | gnas kyi dbang phyug | |
| practitioners who make an instantaneous leap of understanding | cig car ba | |
| practitioners who progress developmentally | rim gyis pa | |
| practitioners who progress in leaps and bounds | thod rgal ba | |
| pratyekabuddha | rang rgyal/rang sangs rgyas | pratyekabuddha |
| pratyekabuddha, level of | rang sangs rgyas kyi sa | pratyekabuddha bhūmi |
| pratyekabuddhas who dwell alone like a rhinoceros | bse ru lta bu'i rang rgyal | khaḍga viśāṇa kalpa pratyekabuddha |
| pratyekabuddhas who live in groups | tshogs spyod pa'i rang rgyal | vargacārin pratyekabuddha |
| precious word empowerment | tshig dbang rin po che | |

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| presence | bdag | ātman |
| presenting the path to peace | zhi ba'i lam ston pa | |
| pride | nga rgyal | māna |
| primary afflictive states | rtsa ba'i nyon mongs | mūla kleśa |
| primordial freedom, level of | gdod ma'i grol sa | |
| primordial unity | zung 'jug | yuganaddha |
| primordial unity as the consummation of all stages of completion | rdzogs pa'i rim pa thams cad kyi mthar thug pa'i zung 'jug | |
| primordial unity in the nonduality of affirmation and denial | rtag chad gnyis med zung 'jug | |
| primordial unity in the nonduality of the perceived object and the perceiving subject | gzung 'dzin gnyis med zung 'jug | |
| primordial unity of basic space and timeless awareness | dbyings ye zung 'jug | |
| primordial unity of bliss and emptiness | bde stong zung 'jug | |
| primordial unity of compassion and emptiness | stong nyid snying rje zung 'jug | |
| primordial unity of deeply ingrained afflictive states and complete enlightenment | kun byang zung 'jug | |
| primordial unity of development and completion | bskyed rdzogs zung 'jug | |

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| primordial unity of focus | dmigs pa zung 'jug | |
| primordial unity of illusory body and utter lucidity | sgyu lus dang 'od
gsal zung 'jug | |
| primordial unity of insight into the inseparability of what is substantial and nonsubstantial | dnegos po dang dnegos
med dbyer med du
gzigs pa'i zung 'jug | |
| primordial unity of instantaneous collapse and gradual dissolution | ril rjes zung 'jug | |
| primordial unity of manifestation and emptiness | snang stong zung 'jug | |
| primordial unity of meditative equipoise and postmeditation | mnyam rjes zung 'jug | |
| primordial unity of mindfulness and its absence | dran pa dran min
zung 'jug | |
| primordial unity of purity and impurity | dag ma dag zung 'jug | |
| primordial unity of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa | 'khor 'das zung 'jug | |
| primordial unity of sleep and waking consciousness | gnyid sad zung 'jug | |
| primordial unity of the masculine principle of skillful means and the feminine principle of sublime intelligence | yab yum thabs
shes zung 'jug | |
| primordial unity of the object and agent of action | bya byed zung 'jug | |

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| primordial unity of the tangible and intangible | rnam bcas rnam med zung 'jug | |
| primordial unity of the two aspects of the lack of identity | bdag med gnyis zung 'jug | |
| primordial unity of the two levels of truth | bden gnyis zung 'jug | |
| primordial unity of what entails residual traces and what does not | lhag bcas lhag med zung 'jug | |
| primordial unity of what has form and what is formless | gzugs can dang gzugs med zung 'jug | |
| primordial unity that requires no more training | mi slob pa'i zung 'jug | |
| primordial unity that still involves training | slob pa'i zung 'jug | |
| primordially empty | gdod nas stong pa | |
| pristine | gtsang ba | śuddha |
| pristine awareness | ye shes | jñāna |
| production | skye ba | jāti |
| progressing in leaps and bounds | thod rgal ba | |
| progressive dissolution of the elements | 'byung ba'i thim rim | |
| proponents of materialist philosophy | dngos por smra ba | vāstavādin |
| protection circle | srung ba'i 'khor lo | rakṣa cakra |
| proximate cause | nye bar skyed pa'i rgyu | upajānyati hetu |

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| pure awareness | rig pa | vidyā |
| pure awareness reaching full expression | rig pa tshad phebs | |
| Pure Discerning Awareness | so sor rig pa | pratisaṃvid |
| pure of any obscuration | sgrib pa dag pa | |
| purely nominal | btags pa ba | prajñāpti |
| qualified emptiness | gzhan stong | |
| quasi-nirmāṇakāya sambhogakāya | phyed sprul longs sku | |
| Quenching of Thirst | 'thung spyod/gcod | |
| Radiant One | 'od 'phro ba | arciṣmatī |
| Rāhu free of obscuration | sgra gcan sgrib bral | rāhu nirāvaraṇa |
| rainbow | 'ja' tshon | indracāpa |
| rainbow body | 'ja' lus | indracāpa kāya |
| rasanā (lateral channel) | ro ma | rasanā |
| reaching the state of suchness | de bzhin gshegs pa | tathāgata |
| reaching the state of suchness, level of | de bzhin gshegs pa'i sa | tathāgata bhūmi |
| reaching the state of well-being | bde bar gshegs pa | sugata |
| reality just as it is | ji lta ba (bzhin) | yathāvat |
| realization of what has been accomplished, level of | byas pa rtogs pa'i sa | kṛtāvi bhūmi |
| realm of buddhahood | sangs rgyas kyi zhing | buddha kṣetra |

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| realm of desire | 'dod pa'i kham | kāmadhātu |
| realm of form | gzugs kyi kham | rūpadhātu |
| realm of formlessness | gzugs med kyi kham | arūpyadhātu |
| recollection | rjes dran | anusmṛti |
| recollection of
former lifetimes | sngon gnas rjes su dran pa | pūrvanirvāsa anusmṛti |
| red energy | dmar cha | |
| refining away major
obscurations, level of | gal chen syong ba'i sa | |
| reflection in a mirror | gzugs brnyan | darpaṇa bimba |
| reflection of the
moon in water | chu zla | udaka candra |
| reflexive consciousness | rang rig | svasaṃvedana |
| regarding one's biased
opinions to be absolutes | lta ba mchog 'dzin | dṛṣṭi parāmarśa |
| regarding personal
rules of deportment
to be absolutes | brtul zhugs mchog 'dzin | śīlavrata parāmarśa |
| reject and accept, to | spang blang/blang dor | heyopadeya |
| relative level of reality | kun rdzob | saṃvṛti |
| relative truth/validity | kun dzob kyi bden pa | saṃvṛti satya |
| reliability | brtan pa | dṛḍha |
| reliance and training | brten slob | |
| rendering impotent,
activity of | ma ning nyid du
bya ba'i las | |
| rendering mute,
activity of | lkugs par 'gyur pa'i las | |

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| replete with compassion | snying rjes yongs
su gang ba | |
| residual traces | lhag ma | avaśeṣa |
| resolution | zad pa | atyaya |
| resolution of phenomena
in their true nature | chos nyid zad pa | |
| resplendent | lhag ge ba | |
| responsiveness | thugs rje | karuṇa |
| resting in equipoise | mnyam par 'jog pa | samādhāna |
| roaming through
various realms | zhing rnams su rgyu ba | |
| Sanskrit grammar | sgra | śābda |
| scattering, activity of | dbye ba'i las | |
| scope | dmigs pa | ālambana |
| secondary afflictive states | nye ba'i nyon mongs | upakleśa |
| secret conduct | gsang ba'i spyod pa | guhya caryā |
| secret empowerment | gsang ba'i dbang | guhyābhiṣeka |
| seeing, level of | mthong ba'i sa | darśana bhūmi |
| seeming identity
of phenomena | chos kyi bdag | dharmātma |
| seemingly
autonomous self | rang dbang gi bdag | svatantrātma |
| self-knowing awareness | rang rig | svasamvēda |
| sensation | tshor ba | vedana |
| sensations, aggregate of | tshor ba'i phung po | vedana skandha |
| sense consciousness | dbang po'i rnam shes | indriya vijñāna |

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| sense fields | skye mched | āyatana |
| serving as a source of
all that is wished for | 'dod dgur sgyur ba | |
| seven aids to
enlightenment | byang chub yan lag bdun | sapta bodhyaṅga |
| seven attributes
of integration | kha sbyor yang lag bdun | saptaṅga sambhukta |
| seven impure levels | ma dag pa'i sa bdun | saptāśuddha bhūmi |
| seven ramifications
of bliss | bde ba'i yan lag bdun | sapta sukhāṅga |
| seven ramifications of
enlightened deeds | mdzad pa'i don bdun | sapta kāryārtha |
| seven vajra attributes | rdo rje'i chos bdun | |
| siddha (accomplished
master) | grub thob | siddha |
| single guideline
of training | bslab bya gcig rim | |
| single point to be known | shes bya gcig rim | |
| single world system | gling bzhi pa'i 'jig rten | |
| six aspects of passion | rjes chags rnam pa drug | ṣaḍ anurāga |
| Six Branches of Union | sbyor ba yan lag drug | ṣaḍaṅga yoga |
| six distinctive attributes | khyad chos drug | ṣaḍ viśeṣaṅga |
| six levels of deeper
discernment | mgnon par shes pa drug | ṣaḍ abhijñā |
| six levels of meditative
stability | bsam gtan sa drug | ṣaḍ dhyāna bhūmi |
| six states of recollection | rjes dran drug | ṣaḍ anusmṛti |
| six transcendent
perfections | pha rol tu phyin pa drug | ṣaḍ pāramitā |

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| sixteen degrees of joy | dga' ba bcu drug | śoḍaśa muditā |
| sixteen degrees of transition | 'pho ba bcu drug | śoḍaśa saṃcāra |
| sixteen descending gradations of mundane joy | yas babs 'jig rten pa'i dga' ba bcu drug | |
| sixteen gradations of bliss | bde ba bcu drug | śoḍaśa sukha |
| sixteen gradations of transcendent joy stabilized upwardly | mas brtan 'jig rten las 'das pa'i dga' ba bcu drug | |
| sixteen steps | skad cig bcu drug | śoḍaśa kṣaṇa |
| sixty melodious qualities of enlightened speech | gsung dbyangs yan lag drug cu | ṣaṣṭi brāhmasvara |
| skillful means | thabs | upāya |
| slaying, activity of | bsad pa'i las | |
| soothing calm | bsil ba | śīta |
| source of phenomena | chos kyi 'byung gnas | dharmākara |
| sovereign lord | khyab bdag | |
| space | nam mkha' | ākāśa |
| special realization, level of | khyad par rtogs pa'i sa | |
| speech vajra | gsung rdo rje | vak vajra |
| sphere of perception | spyod yul | avacara saṃjñā |
| spiritual attainment | dngos grub | siddhi |
| spiritual being of the consort of awareness | rig ma'i skyes bu | |
| spiritual deportment | brtul zhugs | vrata |

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| spiritual deportment
of an all-noble consort
of pure awareness | kun bzang rig ma'i
brtul zhugs | |
| spiritual deportment
of pure awareness | rig pa'i brtul zhugs | vidyā vrata |
| spiritual instructions that
concern the three modes | tshul gsum gyi
gdams ngag | |
| spiritual miracle
of consecration | byin gyis brlabs
pa'i cho 'phrul | |
| spiritual miracle of
empowerment | dbang bskur ba'i
cho 'phrul | |
| spiritual miracle of
meditative absorption | ting nge 'dzin gyi
cho 'phrul | |
| spiritual miracle
of offering | mchod pa'i cho 'phrul | |
| spiritual path | lam | mārga |
| spiritual potential | rigs | gotra |
| spiritual potential,
level of | rigs kyi sa | gotra bhūmi |
| spiritual power | stobs | bala |
| spiritual practice that
completely refines
away obscurations | sgrib pa rnam par
sbyong ba'i rnal 'byor | |
| spiritually
advanced being | 'phags pa | ārya |
| spontaneous
accomplishment | lhun gyis grub pa | anābhoga |
| spontaneous presence | lhun grub | anābhoga |
| śrāvaka | nyan thos | śrāvaka |
| śrāvaka, level of | nyan thos kyi sa | śrāvaka bhūmi |

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|---|---|----------------------|
| stability | brtan pa | dhīra |
| stable abiding | gnas pa | avasthita |
| stable abiding in the fruition state of a nonreturner | phyir mi 'ong ba'i 'bras la gnas pa | anāgāmin phalastha |
| stable abiding in the fruition state of a once-returner | phyir 'ong ba'i 'bras bu la gnas pa | agāmin phalastha |
| stable abiding in the fruition state of a stream-winner | rgyun du zhugs pa'i 'bras bu la gnas pa | srotāpatti phalastha |
| stable abiding in the fruition state of an arhat | dgra bcom pa'i 'bras bu la gnas pa | arhat phalastha |
| stage of completion | rdzogs pa'i rim pa | sampannakrama |
| stage of development | bskyed pa'i rim pa | utpartikrama |
| stage of faith | dad pa'i sa | śraddhā bhūmi |
| state of being worthy due to one's clarity | gsal bar 'os pa | |
| states devoid of perception | 'du shes med pa | asaṃjñā |
| states of edification | mgnon mtho | abhyudaya |
| steadfast | lhan ne ba | |
| stream-winner | rgyun du zhugs pa | srotāpanna |
| sublime intelligence | shes rab | prajñā |
| sublime joy | mchog dga' | pramoda |
| sublime nirmāṇakāya | mchog gi sprul sku | parama nirmāṇakāya |
| sublime state of spiritual attainment | mchog gi dngos grub | parama siddhi |

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|---|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| subliminal karma | mi g.yo ba'i las | neñjya karma |
| subsequent knowledge | rjes shes | anujñāna |
| subsequent understanding | rjes su shes pa | anvaya jñāna |
| subsequent understanding of suffering | sdug bsngal la rjes su shes pa | duḥkhenvaya jñāna |
| subsequent understanding of the all-pervasive origin of suffering | kun 'byung la rjes su shes pa | samudayenvaya jñāna |
| subsequent understanding of the cessation of suffering | 'gog pa la rjes su shes pa | nirodhenvaya jñāna |
| subsequent understanding of the spiritual path | lam la rjes su shes pa | mārgenvaya jñāna |
| substantial existence | rdzas yod | drayasat |
| substantial existence of the individual | gang zag rdzas yod | drayasat pudgala |
| subsumed model | bsdu bya | |
| subsuming model | sdud byed | |
| subtle channels | rtsa | nāḍi |
| subtle energies | rlung | vāyu |
| subtle trait | mtshan ma | nimitta |
| subtlety, level of | srab pa'i sa | |
| subtlety of form | phra mo'i gzugs | |
| suchness itself | de bzhin nyid | tathāta |
| suffering | sdug bsngal | duḥkha |

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| summoning, activity of | dgug pa'i las | |
| sumptuous feast | tsā ru'i bza' ba | |
| sun free of obscuration | nyi ma sgrib bral | sūrya nirāvaraṇa |
| support | rten | āśraya |
| supreme afflictive states | nyon mongs chen po | mahākṛeṣa |
| Supreme Assembly
of the Circles of
Letters, level of | yi ge 'khor lo tshogs
chen gyi sa | |
| supreme bliss | bde ba chen po | mahāsukha |
| supreme delight | dgyes pa chen po | mahāpriya |
| supreme immersion
in genuine being | rnal 'byor chen po | mahāyoga |
| supreme innate
compassion | thugs rje chen po | mahākaruṇa |
| Supreme Meditative
Absorption, level of | ting nge 'dzin chen po'i sa | mahāsamādhi bhūmi |
| supreme passion, path of | 'dod chags chen po'i lam | mahāraga mārga |
| Supreme Timeless
Awareness, level of | ye shes chen po'i sa | mahājñāna bhūmi |
| supreme transference | 'pho ba chen po | mahāsaṃcara |
| supreme unity of innate
purity and equalness | dag mnyam chen po | |
| supremely empty | stong pa chen po | mahāśūnya |
| surpassing the pinnacle | thod rgal | |
| symbol, level of | brda'i sa | |
| symbolic emblem | phyag mtshan | |

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| taking a firm stance | btsan sa zin pa | |
| tangible | snang bcas | ābhāsin |
| tantra of sublime intelligence | shies rab kyi rgyud | prajñā tantra |
| tantra of the yoginīs | rnal 'byor ma'i rgyud | yoginī tantra |
| tantric conduct | sngags kyi spyod pa | mantra caryā |
| techniques for completely refining behavior patterns | spyod pa rnams
sbyong gi dmigs pa | |
| ten extraordinary aspects of knowledge | shes bcu thun
mong ma yin pa | asādhāraṇa daśa jñāna |
| ten factors that require no more training | mi slob pa'i chos bcu | daśaśaikṣa dharma |
| ten great pillars who upheld the lineages of explanation | bshad brgyud kyi
ka chen bcu | |
| ten indications of utter lucidity | 'od gsal gyi rtags bcu | |
| ten kinds of control | dbang bcu | daśa vaśitā |
| ten kinds of spiritual practice | chos spyod bcu | daśa dharmacarya |
| ten powers | stobs bcu | daśa bala |
| ten states of total immersion | zad pa bcu | daśa kṛtsnāyatana |
| terror | 'jigs su rung ba | bhayānaka |
| thematic phase of stage of completion | mtshan bcas rdzogs rim | |
| things in all their multiplicity | ji snyed pa | yāvat |

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| thirteenth level of
the vajra holder | bcu gsum rdo rje
'dzin pa'i sa | |
| thirty-seven factors
that contribute to
enlightenment | byang chub phyogs
kyi chos so bdun | saptatrimśa
bodhipakṣaka dharma |
| thirty-six deeds | mdzad pa sum
bcu rtsa drug | |
| Thirty-three Gods | sum cu rtsa gsum | trayastrimśa devāḥ |
| thirty-two qualities
due to divestment | bral ba'i yon tan
sum cu so gnyis | dvātrimśa
viśaṃyoga guṇa |
| thorough pliancy | shin tu sbyangs pa | |
| thorough training | yongs su sbyong ba | pariśodhana |
| those to be guided | gdul bya | vineya |
| three applications
of mindfulness | dran pa nye bar
bzhag pa gsum | trismṛtyupasthāna |
| three aspects of faith | dad pa gsum | |
| three avenues to
liberation | rnam par thar
pa'i sgo gsum | trivimokṣa mukha |
| Three Compilations | sde snod gsum | tripiṭaka |
| three concepts | 'du shes gsum | |
| three distinctive
applications of
mindfulness | ma 'dres pa'i dran pa
nye bar bzhag pa gsum | |
| three factors of object,
agent, and action | bya byed las gsum | |
| three factors that need
not be closely guarded | bsrung ba med pa gsum | treraḥṣaṇa |
| three guidelines
of training | bslab bya gsum rim | |

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| three higher trainings | lhag pa'i bslab pa gsum | tredhīśikṣā |
| three points to be known | shes bya gsum rim | |
| three pure levels | dag pa'i sa gsum | triśuddha bhūmi |
| three resultant stages in the realm of formlessness | gzugs med kyi 'bras bu gsum | trērūpyaphala |
| three stages of meditative absorption | ting nge 'dzin gsum | |
| three successive steps of subtle experience | snang ba gsum | |
| three yogas | yo ga gsum | triyoga |
| threefold miraculous display | cho 'phrul gsum | triprātihārya |
| threefold purity | dag pa gsum | |
| time | dus | kāla |
| timeless awareness | ye shes | jñāna |
| timeless awareness as the basic space of phenomena | chos dbyings ye shes | dharmadhātu jñāna |
| timeless awareness as ensured fulfillment | bya ba grub pa'i ye shes | kṛtyānuṣṭhāna jñāna |
| timeless awareness as equalness | mnyam nyid kyi ye shes | samatā jñāna |
| timeless awareness vajra | ye shes rdo rje | jñāna vajra |
| total enlightenment | rdzogs pa'i byang chub | sambodhi |
| Total Illumination, level of | kun tu 'od kyi sa | samantaprabha bhūmi |
| Total Illumination, the Lovely and Supreme Orb of the Sun, level of | kun tu 'od nyi ma'i dkyil 'khor chen po mdzes pa'i sa | |

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| total immersion in genuine being, level of | shin tu rnal 'byor gyi sa | |
| total positivity | kun tu bzang po | samantabhadra |
| total recall through mantra | sngags kyi gzungs | mantra dhāraṇī |
| total recall through meaning | don gyi gzungs | artha dhāraṇī |
| total recall through patient acceptance | bzod pa'i gzungs | kṣānti dhāraṇī |
| total recall through words | tshig gi gzungs | vakya dhāraṇī |
| total victory | rnam par rgyal ba | vijaya |
| totally empty | thams cad stong pa | |
| tranquillity | zhi ba | śānta |
| transcendent | 'jig rten las 'das pa | lokottara |
| transcendent and accomplished conqueror | bcom ldan 'das | bhagavat |
| transcendent path | 'jig rten las 'das pa'i lam | lokottara mārga |
| transcendent path of meditation | 'jig rten las 'das pa'i sgom lam | lokottara bhāvana mārga |
| transcendent perfection | pha rol tu phyin pa | pāramitā |
| transformative phase of decisiveness | chod pa'i sgyur ba | |
| transformative phase of dedicated interest | mos pa'i sgyur ba | |
| transformative phase of engagement | 'jug pa'i sgyur ba | |
| transformative phase of transformation | sgyur ba'i sgyur ba | |

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| true attainment | yang dag thob pa nyid | |
| truly authentic | mtshan nyid pa | |
| twelve aspects of the meaning of truth | bden don rnam pa bcu gnyis | |
| twelve hundredfold qualities | yon tan brgya phrag bcu gnyis | |
| twelve links of interdependent origination | rten 'brel yan lag bcu gnyis | dvādaśāṅga
pratītyasamutpāda |
| twenty-five factors of the fruition state | 'bras bu'i chos nyer lnga | pañcaviṃśati
phala dharma |
| twenty-four major sacred sites | gnas chen nyer bzhi | |
| twenty-one aspects of primordial unity | zung 'jug nyer gcig | ekaviṃśati yuganaddhā |
| twenty-one categories of incorruptibility | zag med nyer gcig | ekaviṃśati anastrava |
| two guidelines of training | bslab bya gnyis rim | |
| two kinds of lack of identity | bdag med gnyis | dvāyanātma |
| two levels of truth | bden pa gnyis | dvau satya |
| two points to be known | shes bya gnyis rim | |
| twofold purity | dag pa gnyis ldan | |
| twofold spiritual development | tshogs gnyis gsog pa | |
| ultimate level of reality | don dam | paramārtha |
| ultimate truth | don dam gyi bden pa | paramārtha satya |
| unaffectedness | gyin 'da' ba | |

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| unassessable from any dualistic perspective | gnyis su dpyad du med pa | |
| unceasing | 'gag pa med pa | anirodha |
| unchanging | mi 'gyur ba | avikaraṇa |
| uncontrived | ma bcos pa | akṛtrima |
| understanding of a phenomenon (that is, a Truth) | chos shes pa | dharma jñāna |
| understanding of the phenomenon of suffering | sdug bsngal la chos shes pa | duḥkha dharma jñāna |
| understanding of the phenomenon of the all-pervasive origin of suffering | kun 'byung la chos shes pa | samudaya dharma jñāna |
| understanding of the phenomenon of the cessation of suffering | 'gog pa la chos shes pa | nirodha dharma jñāna |
| understanding of the phenomenon of the spiritual path | lam la chos shes pa | mārga dharma jñāna |
| undifferentiated | rnam dbyer med pa | avibhakta |
| unelaborate | spros med | aprapaṇca |
| unelaborate empowerment | spros med kyi dbang | aprapaṇcābhiṣeka |
| unerringly genuine | phyin ci ma log pa | |
| uninterrupted | rgyun mi chad pa | avicchinna |
| unitary | gcig pa | eka/ekākin |
| unity of bliss and emptiness | bde stong | sukha-śūnyatā |
| unity of emptiness and compassion | stong nyid snying rje | śūnyatā-karūṇa |

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| unity of lucidity and emptiness | gsal stong | bhāsvaṛa-śūnyatā |
| unity of skillful means and sublime intelligence | thabs shes | upāya-jñāna |
| unity of sound and emptiness | grags stong | nāda-śūnyatā |
| unity of subtle energy and mind | rlung sems | |
| unity of the manifestation of things and their emptiness | snang stong | ābhāsa-śūnyatā |
| universal range of perfection, level of | rdzogs pa spyi chibs kyi sa | |
| unmade | 'dus ma byas pa | asaṃskṛta |
| unobstructed | thal le ba | |
| unobstructedness | thogs pa med pa | asakta |
| unpredictable change, level of | 'gyur ba ma nges pa'i sa | |
| unqualified emptiness | rang stong | |
| unrefined | ma sbyangs pa | |
| Unsurpassable Light of Sublime Intelligence, level of | shes rab kyi 'od bla na med pa'i sa | |
| Unsurpassable Timeless Awareness, level of | ye shes bla ma'i sa | |
| unwavering | mi g.yo bā | acala |
| upward inclusion of approaches | theg pa yar ldan | |
| utter lucidity | 'od gsal | prabhāsvaṛa |
| utter unchangeability | mchog tu mi 'gyur ba | paramākṣara |

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| Utterly Joyful One | rab tu dga' ba | pramuditā |
| utterly liberated state of authentic mind | yang dag pa'i sems shin tu rnam par grol ba | samyag vimukti citta |
| utterly liberated state of authentic sublime intelligence | yang dag pa'i shes rab shin tu rnam par grol ba | samyag vimukti prajñā |
| utterly lucid | 'od gsal ba | prabhāsana |
| utterly lucid by its very nature | rang bzhin gyis 'od gsal ba | |
| utterly unelaborate empowerment | rab tu spros med kyi dbang | pratyaprapaṇcābhīṣeka |
| vajra embodiment of the rainbow body | 'ja' lus rdo rje'i sku | indracāpa vajrakāya |
| vajra herald | rdo rje'i pho nya mo | vajradūtī |
| Vajra Holder, level of | rdo rje 'dzin gyi sa | vajradhṛk bhūmi |
| Vajra Level | rdo rje'i sa | vajra bhūmi |
| Vajra Light, Delighting the Mind, level of | rdo rje'i 'od yid dga' ba'i sa | |
| vajra pinnacle | rdo rje rtse mo | vajra śikha |
| vajrakāya | rdo rje'i sku | vajrakāya |
| vajralike samādhi | rdo rje lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin | vajropama samādhi |
| valid cognition | tshad ma | pramāṇa |
| vase empowerment | bum pa'i dbang | kalāśābhīṣeka |
| vault of the basic space of ultimate reality | don dam pa'i mkha' dbyings | |
| very threshold of enlightenment | rgyun gyi mtha' | |

| view | lta ba | darśana/dṛṣṭi |
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| visions of utter lucidity | 'od gsal gyi snang ba | |
| vividly present | lhang nge ba | |
| way in which things actually abide | gnas tshul | |
| way in which things appear | snang tshul | |
| what does not entail residue | lhag med | nirvaśeṣa |
| what entails residue | lhag bcas | sāvaśeṣa |
| white energy | dkar cha | |
| will to be free | nges par 'byung ba | niḥsaraṇa |
| wisdom born of aspiration | smon gnas mkhyen pa | praṇidhijñā |
| without cessation | 'gog pa med pa | anirodha |
| wrathful activity | drag po'i las | |
| yoga of affirming one's spiritual birthright | rigs chen 'byed pa'i rnal 'byor | |
| yoga of perfecting supreme dynamic energy | rtsal chen rdzogs pa'i rnal 'byor | |
| yoga of receiving the supreme transmission | lung chen thob pa'i rnal 'byor | |
| yoga of supreme inspiration | dbugs chen 'byin pa'i rnal 'byor | |
| yoga of the mind's directed intent | 'dun pa sems kyi rnal 'byor | |
| yoga that is the very epitome of skillful means and sublime intelligence | thabs dang shes rab bdag nyid rnal 'byor | |

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| yoginīs born in
pure realms | zhing skyes kyi
rnal 'byor ma | |
| youthful vase body | gzhon nu bum pa sku | kumāra kalaśa kāya |

ABBREVIATIONS

- Dg. K. sDe dge woodblock edition of the bKa' 'gyur. PDF version on Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center Web site, tbrc.org.
- Dg. T. sDe dge woodblock edition of the bsTan 'gyur. PDF version on Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center Web site, tbrc.org.
- NGB rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum, vol. (mTshams brag edition, pub.). PDF version on Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center Web site, tbrc.org.
- NKG rNying ma bka' ma rgyas pa, 43 vols. PDF version on Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center Web site, tbrc.org.
- NKGS rNying ma bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa (Kaḥ thog edition), 120 vols. PDF version on Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center Web site, tbrc.org.
- P *A Comparative Analytical Catalogue of the Kanjur Division of the Tibetan Tripiṭaka: Edited in Peking during the K'ang hsi Era, and At Present Kept in the Library of the Otani Daigaku Kyoto*. 3 vols. The Otani Daigaku Library, Kyoto, 1930–1932. Otani University Shin Buddhist Comprehensive Research Institute: Tibetan Works Research Project, 2005. <http://web.otani.ac.jp/cri/twrp/tibdate/Pekingonlineearch.html>
- Toh. *A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons*. Edited by Hakuju Ui, Munetada Suzuki, Yenshō

Kanakura, and Tōkan Tada. Sendai, Japan: Tōhoku Imperial University, 1934.

fol., ff. folio, folios

l. line

v., vv. verse, verses

NOTES

1. Kongtrul, *Autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrul*, 131. Lama Karma Ngédön was Karma Ngédön Tenpa Rabgyé (1808–1864), the first Dabzang incarnation of the Kagyü tradition; the incarnation line survives to this day, the fourth incarnation's having been born in 1996.
2. "Later, I offered this to my lord guru for his inspection, and on that occasion he gave me great encouragement, saying, 'This is definitely due to the blessings of your spiritual masters and the power that comes from having the *ḍākinīs* open up your subtle channels. We will call this *The Treasury of the Knowable*, the first of the five great Treasuries you will produce. Now you must write your own commentary to it.'" Ibid.
3. See the colophon to the entire work, in the present volume.
4. Kongtrul, *Autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrul*, 176.
5. The *Treasury of the Knowable* (*Shes bya mdzod*). For this series, the translation "*Treasury of Knowledge*" has been chosen; the original title, however, refers not so much to knowledge (*shes pa*) per se as to what it is that is or can be known (*shes bya*).
6. The *Encompassment of All That Is Knowable* (*Shes bya kun khyab*). This is the familiar short form of the complete title of the source verse, the *Encompassment of All That Is Knowable: A Treatise That Sets Forth the Three Higher Trainings in an Excellent Manner, being a Treasury of the Precious and Sublime Speech [of the Buddha], Compiled from All the Avenues of the Spiritual Approaches* (*Theg pa'i sgo kun las btus pa gsung rab rin po che'i mdzod bslab pa gsum legs par ston pa'i bstan bcos Shes bya kun khyab*).
7. *An Infinite Ocean of the Knowable: A Comprehensive Summary That Concisely Elucidates the Source Text, the "Encompassment of All That Is Knowable"* (*Shes bya kun la khyab pa'i gzhiung lugs nyung ngu'i tshig gis rnam par 'grol ba legs bshad yongs 'du Shes bya mtha' yas pa'i rgya mtsho*).
8. Kongtrul, *Autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrul*, 263. For the tables of contents for the Five Treasuries, see *ibid.*, 263–75 and 515–31.
9. That is, the *Treasury of Knowledge*.
10. This introductory section is contained in Kongtrul, the *Treasury of Knowledge: Book One: Myriad Worlds*, 79–89. It is a commonly said that the Buddhist teachings are positive under any and all circumstances ("good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end"), and this theme is applied to individual works, with the introduction being the first of the three parts, the main body of the work

(in the case of the *Treasury of Knowledge*, the ten books, each with four parts, that constitute the series) being the second, and the conclusion being the third.

11. The conclusion is included in the present volume.
12. Kongtrul, *Autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrul*, 263–64.
13. *Ibid.*, 77.
14. Kongtrul bases his discussions of the Sarma interpretation of the Vajrayāna to a large extent on the writings of Kagyü masters, especially the third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorjé (1284–1339).
15. Guenther, *Treasures on the Tibetan Middle Way*, 42.
16. I am indebted to Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen of Naropa University and Nitārtha *international*, currently resident in Boulder, Colo., for the following discussion.
17. Zhe chen dbOn sprul 'Gyur med mthu stobs rnam rgyal (b. 1787).
18. Kongtrul, *Autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrul*, 29.
19. *Ibid.*, 64.
20. 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po (1820–1897).
21. The Tibetan calendar is based on a sixty-year cycle, derived from the combination of a cycle of twelve animals in conjunction with five elements. The Fire Hare Year is considered year one of any given cycle.
22. *Ibid.*, 147.
23. See Kongtrul, *Jamgön Kongtrul's Retreat Manual*, 103–12.
24. This source is also known as the *Heart Essence of Secrets* (Skt. *Guhyagarbha*; Tib. *gSang ba'i snying po*), (Toh. 832), Dg. K., rNying rgyud, vol. Kha, ff. 110b–132a, and is the primary source for the teachings of the Mahāyoga approach.
25. Tib. 'Od gsal rdo rje snying po.
26. Jamgön Kongtrul discusses these stages in detail in Book 8 of the *Treasury of Knowledge*. Parts 1 and 2 of Book 8 (*The Foundations of Meditation*) are forthcoming in a translation by Richard Barron. Part 3 has been published as *The Treasury of Knowledge: Book Eight, Part Three: The Elements of Tantric Practice*. Part 4 has appeared under the title *The Treasury of Knowledge: Book Eight, Part Four: Esoteric Instructions*.
27. That is, the approaches of the śrāvaka, the pratyekabuddha, and the bodhisattva.
28. "States of edification" is another way of referring to higher states of rebirth within saṃsāra; "definitive excellence" is a term for the state of complete enlightenment, comprising both liberation and omniscience.
29. "Corruptible" implies anything that contributes to the development of, or is affected by, afflictive states.
30. That is, the last four of the five paths—those of linkage, seeing, meditation, and consummation (or no more training).
31. This distinction is based on whether or not factors to be eliminated are still present in one's makeup; only on the fruition level of buddhahood (that is, the path of no more training) are these factors completely eliminated, and so spiritual development is no longer necessary.
32. An alternate form, used in compounds, for the primary form *pathin*.
33. The more complete title of this source is the *Compendium of the Perfection of Sublime Intelligence*, (Toh. 13), Dg. K., Śes-phyin sna tshogs, vol. Ka, p. 5, l. 3.
34. "Nominally imputed" refers to something that is only conceptually designated, without having any inherent status of its own.

35. According to this quotation from Jñānamitra, the Truth of the Path consists of the paths of seeing and meditation. Unlike the experiences associated with the paths of accumulation and linkage, only the realization aroused on the paths of seeing and meditation is ultimately valid in the perception of spiritually advanced beings.
36. Jñānamitra was an Indian Buddhist master who authored two commentaries on the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras. I have been unable to locate the passage cited in either of these commentaries.
37. Sherab Bar of Dri ('Bri Shes rab 'bar) was an eleventh-century Tibetan master who wrote commentaries on the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras.
38. A primary function of mind or consciousness that is karmically neutral but that perpetuates habitual patterns and so serves as a support for both karmic potentials and their natural consequences.
39. Another term for the path of no more training.
40. This phase marks the onset of the second path, that of linkage.
41. These applications are associated with the cultivation of deeper insight. They are: mindfulness of the body, sensations, mind, and phenomena.
42. These aspects are: eliminating the negative factors in one's makeup that have already come into being, preventing the development of negative factors that have not yet come into being, encouraging the development of positive factors that have not yet come in to being, and increasing the positive factors that have already come into being.
43. These four factors are called "bases" because they serve as causes for one's attainment of five levels of deeper discernment (the supernormal powers)—clairvoyance, clairsentience, recall of past lifetimes, telepathy, and special powers (such as flying, passing through solid matter, and creating emanations). The four bases are states of meditation involving intention, diligence, attention, and mental analysis—states that focus on the elimination of factors in one's makeup that need to be eliminated. It is noteworthy that in the Buddhist tradition such powers are regarded as natural by-products of meditative absorption but not spiritual goals in themselves; rather, they pose the risk of becoming distractions or means of self-aggrandizement.
44. The "accomplishment of armor" is a term for the way in which a bodhisattva practices all six perfections within the context of each of the six.
45. The northern continent of Uttarakuru (one of the four continents of the human realm in traditional Buddhist cosmology) is excluded because the wealth and preoccupation of human beings in this realm preclude the inclination or leisure to pursue spiritual practice.
46. The karmic limitations of these beings and those in Uttarakuru are mentioned in the *Treasury of Abhidharma* (chap. 4, vv. 96–98), Toh. 4089 (Dg. T., mNgon pa, vol. Ku, p. 28, lines 3–5). The Abhidharma and Vinaya literature contain numerous references to ancient biases concerning those who fall outside of what society deemed normative sexuality. For a study of this and related topics, see Zwilling, "Homosexuality as Seen in Indian Buddhist Texts."
47. These are discussed below in the context of the second path, that of linkage.
48. Buddhist meditation methods can be broadly divided into those that bring a calm abiding to one's mind and those that develop deeper insight. (Kongtrul discusses these in detail in Book 8, Part 1 of the *Treasury of Knowledge*.) A standard model for

developing calm abiding involves nine methods of resting the mind that culminate in a state of complete meditative equipoise. By familiarizing oneself with this state, one comes to a state of meditative absorption that happens of its own accord, without effort being necessary. This is termed “the one-pointed calm abiding of a mind in the desire realm.” Once the bliss of true mental pliancy has arisen, it is termed “authentic calm abiding that is included within the stages of meditative stability.”

49. An “ordinary individual” is someone who has not yet attained the path of seeing as defined by any of the Buddhist approaches; once one attains the path of seeing, one becomes a “spiritually advanced being” according to that approach.
50. Techniques that refine one’s behavior patterns are used as antidotes to purify one’s mind of afflictive states and to prevent their recurrence. The example given is the antidote to desire and attachment—that is, to focus on what is unattractive in the desirable object. The antidote to aversion is to focus on love; to ignorance, to focus on the process of interdependent origination; to pride, to focus on a precise analysis of the elements of one’s mind and body; and to indulging in concepts, to focus on the inhalation and exhalation of the breath.
51. There are four general categories of antidotes: those that involve confrontation, elimination, providing support, and distancing. Antidotes involving confrontation are likened to water’s being used to immediately extinguish a fire; antidotes involving elimination are similar to means that ensure that the fire will not reignite; antidotes providing support entail some means of stabilizing the elimination that has taken place, to ensure that the problem does not recur; and antidotes involving distancing ensure that the possibility of the eliminated factors’ reoccurring becomes more and more remote.
52. That is, the lack of true identity in one’s individual personality and the lack of true identity in any other phenomenon.
53. Sublime intelligence that comes from hearing, contemplating, and meditating on spiritual teachings. “Hearing” teachings is the entire process that involves receiving oral explanations of teachings (as opposed to simply reading books on one’s own), memorization, oral recitation of texts, and examinations to ensure that one has understood both the words of the teachings and the underlying meaning. Contemplation consists of examining what one has originally understood, in order to ascertain the validity of the teachings in the light of reason. Meditation is the process of familiarizing oneself with what has been ascertained and assimilating it in an experiential way, either by an analytical approach or letting the mind settle.
54. That is, a bodhisattva in the more nominal sense of someone who is following the Mahāyāna approach, not in the more formal sense of someone who has attained one of the ten levels of realization. Throughout his section on the paths and levels of the dialectical approach, Kongtrul’s discussion includes treatments of the Hīnayāna (that is, śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha) approach and that of the Mahāyāna; where any discrepancy exists, he indicates which approach is under discussion. In other such treatises, the models of the five paths in the two approaches are usually discussed separately; see, for example, Longchen Rabjam, *Precious Treasury of Philosophical Systems*, 127–238.
55. That is, bodhicitta as aspiration and as application.
56. These are the ordinations of a monk, a nun, a novice monk, a novice nun, a layman, a laywoman, and a special category for women between novice and fully ordained

nun (called “female spiritual practitioner”). See Kongtrul, *Treasury of Knowledge: Book Five: Buddhist Ethics*, 88–89.

57. These are the four attitudes of immeasurable love, compassion, joy, and impartiality.
58. On the path of accumulation, the emphasis is on the dual process of refining away obscurations and consolidating positive qualities, in order to render the practitioner’s mind more suitable for higher levels of spiritual development.
59. While these five states reach their full expression only on the level of buddhahood, they are experienced to some degree on the lower paths. They are: (1) the “flesh-and-blood eye,” an extension of ordinary vision that allows one to perceive things over enormous distances; (2) the “divine eye,” the ability to see everything throughout the furthest reaches of space; (3) the “eye of sublime intelligence,” the ability to perceive all phenomena with nonconceptual awareness; (4) the “eye of phenomena,” the ability to perceive the interdependent connection between phenomena; and (5) the “eye of timeless awareness,” the ability to perceive reality, the true nature of phenomena, just as it is, as well as all phenomena in their multiplicity.
60. See note 43.
61. Maitreya, *Ornament of the Sūtras*, chap. 15, v. 3, (Toh. 4020), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 37, lines 1–2.
62. This is a more accurate rendering of the term than the usual “Four Noble Truths.” These are not truths that are evident in the direct experience of ordinary beings but are seen to be so by “noble ones,” that is, those who are spiritually advanced due to their having attained the path of seeing in any of the three approaches (those of śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, or bodhisattvas).
63. These are to take what is unclean to be clean, to take what has no identity to have identity, to take suffering to be happiness, and to take what is impermanent to be permanent.
64. That is, ultimate and relative truth. The various schools of Buddhist philosophy define these levels differently. Roughly speaking, for the Vaibhāṣika school of the śrāvaka approach, what is relatively true, or valid, are the more obvious manifestations of dualistic consciousness (that is, anything that can be physically or mentally deconstructed to the point where the mind no longer conceives of the thing in question existing any longer), while what is ultimately true is that which cannot be thus deconstructed. (They accepted indivisible particles of matter and indivisible moments of consciousness to be the ultimately real “building blocks” of our phenomenal universe.) For the Sautrāntikas, relative truth consists of things that are merely imputed conceptually, while ultimate truth consists of anything that can withstand critical mental investigation such that it can be found to exist in its own right, without recourse to linguistic or conceptual labels. For the Cittamātra school, things that are “imputed” or “dependent” (that is, dependent on other causes and conditions) are only relatively valid (and thus to be investigated with reasoning from the perspective of conventional logic), while whatever is “absolute” is ultimately valid (and thus to be investigated with reasoning from this more ultimate perspective). Here Kongtrul is using the idiom “the two levels of truth” in its Madhyamaka connotation: the relative level of truth consists of all that manifests (due to the process of interdependent origination) in our dualistic perception and consciousness, while the ultimate level consists of emptiness as the way in which

things actually abide (as distinct from the way in which they appear), which can be fully apprehended only by nondual awareness.

65. These would seem to be identical to the “eight mundane values,” which are ways in which one is motivated by attachment to nominally positive experiences (gain, fame, praise, and pleasure) and adverse reactions to their opposites (loss, notoriety, blame, and pain).
66. This realization signals the onset of the second of the five paths, that of linkage; it is discussed below in the section on that path.
67. These terms are found more often in the Prajñāpāramitā literature, in which the term “path of accumulation” does not appear to a great extent.
68. This refers to the realization that derives from meditation undertaken on the path of linkage, which entails a foreshadowing of the experience of the true nature of reality that takes place on the path of seeing.
69. See note 31.
70. This term refers to the stage of spiritual development that is still based on a sense of dedication and a conceptual understanding of the words and meanings in the teachings, without the direct and transformative experience that comes with the path of seeing, when one makes the transition from an ordinary mortal individual to a spiritually advanced being. As such, it can also include the path of accumulation in some contexts.
71. Meditation is, of course, involved in all four of the five paths. Here the term “corruptible path of meditation” is used to distinguish this third path from the specific case of the fourth path, the incorruptible path of meditation.
72. A term used in the Prajñāpāramitā literature to describe the path of linkage as a still mundane process that allows one to engage in the path of seeing, which transcends the mundane sphere.
73. That is, the lack of true identity in the individual personality or in phenomena.
74. “Meditative warmth” involves insight gained through meditating on the Four Truths; one realizes that one’s perception of phenomena is purely an internal process of labeling, without there being any external object that has an independent nature. This insight is felt as both a physical sensation of warmth and a mental sense of “warming up.”
75. That is, the factors that are corruptible, in that they are still subject to being undermined by such counterproductive influences as afflictive mental states.
76. With the peak experience, the insight one has gained with meditative warmth is further developed to include the realization that the object-oriented aspect of one’s experience (the process by which the mind reifies what it perceives to be objects) does not represent things that have independent natures of their own.
77. The more common Sanskrit equivalent of the Tibetan term *rtse mo* is *mūrdhan*, which literally means “peak” or “summit.” The Sanskrit term *mūrti* has a basic meaning of “(that which has taken) form.”
78. “Patient acceptance” in this context involves the following: realization concerning the object-oriented aspect of one’s experience (first gained during the phase of the peak experience) intensifies; in addition, one gains an initial degree of realization that the subject-oriented aspect of one’s experience (the mind that conceives of itself as a perceiving subject) does not represent something with an independent nature.

79. These are the paths of seeing, meditation, and no more training; the attainment of the path of seeing constitutes the shift from the state of an ordinary mortal being to that of a spiritually advanced one.
80. A congruent cause is one that brings about a result that is something of similar type to the cause itself, such as barley producing barley, and virtue producing virtue.
81. The highest mundane experience entails the intermediate degree of the realization, gained during the phase of patient acceptance, concerning the subject-oriented aspect of one's experience.
82. A governing condition is one that exerts a controlling influence over its result; for example, the visual faculty is a governing condition in that it acts as a controlling agent that brings the respective kind of consciousness into being as its specific result.
83. Maitreya, *Ornament of Manifest Realization*, chap. 1, v. 34d, (Toh. 3786), Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, p. 5, l. 6.
84. The text reads, in error, "both of the above phases, . . ."
85. Each of the Four Truths is divided into four topics, making a total of sixteen. See Longchen Rabjam, *Precious Treasury of Philosophical Systems*, 131–32:

What are these sixteen topics? Four concern the truth of suffering: impermanence, suffering, emptiness, and the lack of identity. Four concern the universal origin of suffering: the fact that all things have causes, that these causes are the universal origin of suffering, that they are produced relentlessly, and that they are perpetuated by conditions. Four concern the cessation of suffering: cessation, peace, the ideal situation, and disengagement. Four concern the path: the path itself, the logic of this process, the proven attainment to which it leads, and the certainty of release.

Thus there are four topics that concern the truth of suffering:

- (1) impermanence, the fact that things do not last but only come about moment-by-moment due to circumstances;
- (2) suffering, the fact that one is constantly subject to suffering in any of its three forms (as overt suffering, as suffering that results from change, and as the subliminal suffering entailed in the mind-body aggregates);
- (3) emptiness, the fact that phenomena have no inherent existence as constant, unitary, and autonomous entities; and
- (4) the lack of identity, the fact that the mind-body aggregates do not constitute a constant, unitary, and autonomous self.

There are the four topics that concern the universal origin of suffering:

- (5) the fact that all things in essence have causes, in that karma and afflictive states produce the suffering of saṃsāra;
- (6) the fact that these causes are the universal origin of suffering, in that they produce all the experiences of beings in the three realms;
- (7) the fact that such results are produced relentlessly, in that karma and afflictive states are continuously producing suffering moment-by-moment; and
- (8) the fact that they are perpetuated by conditions, in that karma and afflictive states produce the mind-body aggregates, for example, which then further support the production of suffering.

There are four topics that concern the cessation of suffering:

(9) cessation, the fact that once afflictive states are eliminated, they do not reoccur;

(10) peace, that fact that such cessation entails the absence of suffering;

(11) the ideal situation, in that one will no longer be reborn in any of the three realms or experience their attendant suffering; and

(12) disengagement, the fact that one is liberated from saṃsāra and attains the blissful state of nirvāṇa.

And there are four topics that concern the path:

(13) the path itself, in that there is a process whereby one moves from the state of an ordinary mortal individual to that of a spiritually advanced being;

(14) the logic of this process, in that it serves as an antidote to the afflictive states, which are ultimately unjustifiable;

(15) the proven attainment to which the process leads, in that one's errant mind is brought to a more authentic state of being; and

(16) the certainty of release, in that the path frees one from saṃsāra while leading one to the state of nirvāṇa.

86. That is, the first phase of the path of linkage is nominally termed a lesser version of the path of seeing because the realization it entails is analogous to the deeply transformative experience undergone on the path of seeing, when one makes the transition from an ordinary individual to a spiritually advanced being.
87. The path up to but not including the path of seeing, that is, the paths of accumulation and linkage. On these paths one is still an ordinary individual rooted in this world; it is only with the attainment of the path of seeing that one becomes a spiritually advanced being who has transcended the limitations of the ordinary world.
88. The path from the path of seeing onward, that is, the paths of seeing, meditation, and no more training.
89. As represented in Asaṅga's *Compendium of Abhidharma* and Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Abhidharma*, respectively. Asaṅga's work is based on the tenets of the Cittamātra, or Mind Only, school of Buddhist philosophy of the Mahāyāna approach; Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Abhidharma* is the primary source for the "lower tradition" of Abhidharma, so called because it is considered the definitive exposition of the tenets of the Vaibhāṣika school of the śrāvaka approach.
90. That is, the phases of meditative warmth, the peak experience, and the highest mundane experience.
91. The degree to which timeless awareness is experienced by someone on the path of linkage is still conceptual (albeit on a subtle level) when assessed from the perspective of the path of seeing. But since this first degree of a state of clarity leads to a direct mode of perception, it is not overtly conceptual in the sense of ordinary consciousness, which entails concepts based on the ascribing of terms and their meanings. Such issues of what is conceptual versus what is nonconceptual have fueled much debate throughout the history of the Buddhist tradition.
92. These are the powers of faith, diligence, mindfulness, meditative absorption, and sublime intelligence.
93. The five strengths are called by the same names as the five governing powers. See Longchenpa, *Kindly Bent to Ease Us*, vol. 1, 243: "as 'powers', these five initiate processes of refinement . . . as 'strengths' which overcome all that impedes the link-up with the Stage of Seeing."
94. The northern continent of Uttarakuru (one of the four continents of the human

- realm in traditional Buddhist cosmology) is excluded because the impediments posed by the collective karma of human beings in this realm are such that they lack the humility and sensitivity to arouse in themselves a will to become free of saṃsāra. They are therefore considered to be unsuitable candidates for the formal ordinations (monastic or lay) that form the foundation for spiritual development on the path of accumulation. See Vasubandhu, *Treasury of Abhidharma*, chap. 4, vv. 43 and 58, (Toh. 4089), Dg. T., mNgon pa, vol. Ku, p. 24, l. 2 and p. 25, l. 3.
95. These are the gods of the states of the Four Great Kings, the Thirty-three Gods, the Gods Free of Conflict, the Joyous Realm, the Gods Who Enjoy Emanations, and the Gods Who Enjoy the Emanations of Others. For a discussion of these states within the realm of desire, see Kongtrul, *Treasury of Knowledge: Book One: Myriad Worlds*, 115–19.
 96. That is, the sūtras that emphasize the teachings on the buddha nature, tathāgatagarbha.
 97. The term “entirely sufficient preparatory stage” refers specifically to the preparatory phase of the first level of meditative stability. The term connotes that, while one has not yet attained the actual first level, one is nevertheless capable of eliminating the afflictive states associated with the realm of desire on the basis of this preparatory phase alone. The “nominal aspect” of the actual stage (the “actual stage per se”) is its initial onset, and the “distinctive aspect” is its full expression.
 98. Pratyekabuddhas are held to be of three types: those who are solitary like a rhinoceros, those who participate a great deal in groups, and those who participate to a lesser extent in groups. Here Kongtrul makes a distinction between the path of linkage as experienced by those of the latter two types and by those of the former type. Like the unicorn in Western lore, the rhinoceros is noted in Indian legends for its habit of living alone in solitude; hence, a pratyekabuddha is often referred to metaphorically as a “rhinoceros.” For a discussion of these three types, see Longchen Rabjam, *The Precious Treasury of Philosophical Systems*, 142–49.
 99. That is, one who, like Śākyamuni (the “Teacher” in the citation), is destined to attain buddhahood.
 100. For detailed discussions of the various schools of Buddhist philosophy to which Kongtrul refers in his treatment of the paths and levels of the dialectical approach, see his *Treasury of Knowledge: Book Six, Part Three: Frameworks of Buddhist Philosophy*.
 101. Vasubandhu, *Treasury of Abhidharma*, chap. 6, v. 24ab, (Toh. 4089), Dg. T., mNgon pa, vol. Ku, p. 38, lines 3–4.
 102. The term “afflictive states” denotes states of mind that either produce physical and mental distress or cause one to commit negative actions, which lead to experiences of such suffering in the future. Some of these are emotional states (desire, anger, and so forth), while others are misguided beliefs (such as the belief in the reality of a “self” connected with the transitory mind-body aggregates) or habitual patterns such as laziness and inattentiveness.
 103. That is, the existence of an individual being as some autonomous and self-justifying entity that “stands on its own.”
 104. The distinction being drawn is between the more obvious misconception that “an individual” (such as one’s own sense of individual identity) is a thing that has substantial existence in its own right, and the more subtle misconception that the

mental construct of “an individual” (such as one’s sense of “I”) is something with even nominal existence.

105. Maitreya, *Ornament of Manifest Realization*, chap. 1, vv. 35–36, (Toh. 3786), Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, p. 110, l. 7 through p. 111, l. 1. The source gives a slightly different reading of verse 36, with the following line order:

It is also held that there are two ways in which the perceiving mind is experienced—
as the basis for substantial existence and that of nominal existence—
what is, in essence, a seemingly autonomous self, for example,
and similarly the basis of such factors as the mind-body aggregates.

106. Here the term “reflexive consciousness” refers to the direct perception that is born of a quasi-nonconceptual state of consciousness.
107. Sublime intelligence that comes about through hearing teachings to gain initial understanding, through contemplating them to eliminate errors in judgment or speculation, and through meditating on them to integrate their meaning in one’s direct experience.
108. According to the Buddhist epistemological teachings on what is termed “valid cognition,” a familiarity with such afflictive states as desire and attachment has an element of reflexive (which is to say in this context, quasi-nonconceptual) awareness; the emotional response has its own power to which it habituates itself, so that there is a sense of there being no distinction between the experience of desire and the one experiencing it; in a manner of speaking, it is as though the experience experiences itself.
109. That is, the absence of any independent nature in the individual personality (which relates to the perceiving mind) or in phenomena (which relates to perceived objects).
110. Of these two kinds of obscuration, those imposed by afflictive states function specifically as hindrances to one’s attainment of liberation, while the cognitive obscurations, imposed by the dualistic state of consciousness (involving the reifying of subject, object, and their interrelationship), function specifically as hindrances to one’s attainment of omniscience. Complete enlightenment entails the elimination of both kinds of obscurations and constitutes the consummate state both of liberation from saṃsāra and of omniscience.
111. The other half is the seeming identity of the phenomenon of the subjective mind that perceives objects; this is related to, yet distinct from, the lack of any identity to the individual personality (see the following discussion).
112. That is, on the paths of linkage associated with the three spiritual approaches, there is no difference in the essence of the realization that things have no identity, as experienced by a śrāvaka, a pratyekabuddha, or a bodhisattva; there is, however, a distinction to be made in terms of the degree of completeness or incompleteness in the scope of such realization.
113. In particular, the extensive and middle-length Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras.
114. Kongtrul later cites the identical passage and attributes it to a source entitled the “Mother.” Tibetans use this familiar name in referring to one of the three major Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras: the “*Extensive Mother*” in one hundred thousand verses, the “*Intermediate Mother*” in twenty-five thousand verses, or the “*Abridged Mother*” in eight thousand verses. Passages similar to the one cited here occur in all three of

these versions. In the *Transcendent Perfection of Sublime Intelligence in Eight Thousand Verses*, (Toh. 12), Dg. K., Śes phyin brGyad stong pa, vol. Ka, p. 6, lines 2–3, we read the following:

Those who wish to train on the levels of the śrāvakas, moreover, should listen to this teaching on the transcendent perfection of sublime intelligence; they should memorize it, they should hold to it, they should read it, they should master it completely, they should recite it aloud. They should train in this transcendent perfection of sublime intelligence, they should immerse themselves in this yoga.

In the *Transcendent Perfection of Sublime Intelligence in Twenty-five Thousand Verses*, (Toh. 9), Dg. K., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, fol. 125.b.3–4 (p. 250), the version is as follows:

Those who wish to train on the levels of the śrāvakas, moreover, should listen attentively to this teaching on the transcendent perfection of sublime intelligence; they should memorize it, they should hold to it, they should read it, they should master it thoroughly, they should think about it correctly.

The identical passage occurs in the *Transcendent Perfection of Sublime Intelligence in One Hundred Thousand Verses*, (Toh. 8), Dg. K., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, fol. 332.b.1–2 (p. 664).

115. That is, bodhisattvas.
116. That is, the patient acceptance of one's feeling no anxiety concerning the profound implications of emptiness as the true nature of phenomena. *Compendium of the Perfection of Sublime Intelligence*, (Toh. 13), Dg. K., Śes-phyin sna tshogs, vol. Ka, p. 6, lines 4–5.
117. That is, there is no longer any possibility of fundamentally positive qualities being interrupted or negated. With the attainment of the second of the four anticipatory phases of the path of linkage (that of the peak experience), these qualities can never again be interrupted.
118. This idiom generally refers to the states of the hells, the pretas, and the animal realm.
119. The lines are actually from Vasubandhu, *Treasury of Abhidharma*, chap. 6, v. 23ab, (Toh. 4089), Dg. T., mNgon pa, vol. Ku, p. 38, l. 3.
120. The power of complete recall involves a distinctive degree of mindfulness and sublime intelligence, such that one is able to retain in memory the words and meanings of the teachings of the dharma. This power encourages the positive effect such recall brings, while contributing to the elimination of negative and counterproductive factors in one's makeup.
121. *Cloud of the Rare and Excellent*, (Toh. 231), Dg. K., mDo sde, vol. Wa, pp. 1–224. Here Kongtrul seems to be paraphrasing, rather than citing directly from this source.
122. That is, *Ornament of the Sūtras*.
123. These four phases anticipate the path of seeing, which constitutes a decisive breakthrough that represents a shift from the state of an ordinary mortal individual to that of a spiritually advanced being. Nevertheless, they still pertain to the ordinary mortal state, and so derive from meditation that is still “of this world.”

124. That is, the misconstruing of both perceived objects and the perceiving mind as these relate to the false assumption of an identity to the individual personality and that of phenomena.
125. Until one has attained the direct insight into the true nature of phenomena as emptiness on the path of seeing, one's practice on the paths of accumulation and linkage is based more on an understanding of emptiness as an intellectual conviction, or an idea held in mind.
126. Kongtrul here presents the interpretation that, of the two levels of obscuration (afflictive and cognitive), the path of seeing eliminates only the conceptual aspect of the afflictive obscurations; the more instinctive aspect is eliminated on the first seven levels of realization on the path of meditation. The cognitive obscurations are eliminated on the last three levels of realization.
127. This is specifically a reference to the four states of spiritually advanced beings in the śrāvaka approach—stream-winners, once-returners, nonreturners, and arhats—with each state involving the two phases of initial entrance and stable abiding.
128. These are factors that contribute to one's integrating meditative absorption and sublime intelligence. They are: authentic mindfulness, an extremely precise analysis of phenomena, authentic diligence, authentic joy, authentic pliancy, authentic impartiality, and authentic meditative absorption.
129. The source verses here refer to a total of 108 factors, but the commentary below gives 112, with the supporting calculations. The total of 108 is likely an error in the text; however, different schools of thought present slightly different totals, and different totals can apply to factors associated with the afflictive and cognitive obscurations.
130. This fixation is the seemingly intuitive (but erroneous and emotionally biased) sense that some real, constant "self" exists in conjunction with, or as the sum total of, the mind-body aggregates, which are in fact merely a collection of components that arise and cease moment-by-moment.
131. This fixation is specifically one of either naïve realism (affirming the seemingly inherent existence of the supposed "self" or the mind-body aggregates) or nihilistic denial (the conviction that none of this exists in any sense whatsoever, however nominal).
132. These are such biased opinions as a denial of the process of cause-and-effect in one's ordinary experience, thus undermining the reasons for making correct moral choices.
133. This is the conviction that specific activities or codes of behavior alone guarantee one spiritual liberation.
134. Vasubandhu, *Treasury of Abhidharma*, chap. 5, v. 4, (Toh. 4089), Dg. T., mNgon pa, vol. Ku, p. 31, lines 2–3.
135. The factors to be eliminated on the path seeing that are associated with the realm of desire are thirty-two in number ("ten, seven, seven, eight" in the lines cited); those associated with the realms of form and formlessness are twenty-eight in each realm, making for a total of eighty-eight factors to be eliminated. In his *Precious Treasury of Philosophical Systems*, 135, Longchenpa gives the following explanation:

How these functions are referred to in the *Treasury of Abhidharma*:

There are ten factors, then seven, seven, and eight, omitting the three and the two belief systems.

Here “omitting the three . . . belief systems” refers to not engaging in the first two and the last of the above-mentioned five belief systems, while “omitting the . . . two belief systems” refers to not engaging in the first two of the five, although one does engage in the rest of the ten factors. Thus, there are thirty-two factors to be eliminated in the realm of desire. [That is, the ten factors eliminated through direct perception of the truth of suffering, plus the seven eliminated through direct perception of the truth of its universal origin, plus the seven eliminated through direct perception of the truth of its cessation, plus the eight eliminated through direct perception of the truth of the path.] Since anger is absent in the two higher realms, there are in each of these realms twenty-eight factors focusing on the four truths. [That is, with the absence of anger, the figures are nine, six, six, and seven, totaling twenty-eight.] These are added together, and so it is held that there are a total of eighty-eight factors to be eliminated on the path of seeing.

136. A number of texts by Asaṅga entitled “Summaries” are found in the Sems tsam section of the bsTan ’gyur, but the source being cited here would seem to be a Sautrāntika text. See Longchen Rabjam, *The Precious Treasury of Philosophical Systems*, 136:

According to the Sautrāntika system, there are ten factors to be eliminated by focusing on the truth of suffering as it pertains to the realm of desire. For each of the three remaining truths, two belief systems—the belief in the reality of the perishable aggregates and the belief in some ideological extreme—can be omitted, while the remaining eight factors are functioning in each case, giving a total of thirty-four factors.

In the two higher realms, the four factors of anger associated with the four truths can be omitted, giving a total of thirty factors to be eliminated for each realm. The final number of factors is considered to be ninety-four.

137. A primary source for the “higher tradition” of Abhidharma. The relevant discussion is found in Asaṅga, *Compendium of Abhidharma*, (Toh. 4048), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Ri, pp. 166–68.
138. Both editions of the *Treasury of Knowledge* consulted have “is the case,” but the context implies otherwise. As noted previously (see note 129), the discrepancy between there being 108 or 112 factors to be eliminated may be a result of the interpretations of different schools within the original Indian Buddhist tradition.
139. Source not identified.
140. More specifically, the Vaibhāṣika school, whose tenets are set forth in the *Treasury of Abhidharma*.
141. Vasubandhu, *Treasury of Abhidharma*, chap. 6, v. 77cd, (Toh. 4089), Dg. T., mNgon pa, vol. Ku, p. 42, lines 3–4.
142. In the Vaibhāṣika model, this is a case of one truly existent entity doing away with another. The primary modes of consciousness and secondary mental states associated with the afflictive obscurations are therefore arrested.

143. Here this refers to the ways in which the śrāvaka and Mahāyāna approaches (not including the interpretations based on the sūtras of definitive meaning) discuss things on the relative level.
144. That is, the way in which the Mahāyāna approach (based on the sūtras of definitive meaning) discusses the ultimate level of reality.
145. Maitreya, *Ornament of Manifest Realization*, chap. 5, v. 21ab, (Toh. 3786), Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, p. 19, lines 3–4.
146. Śāntideva, *Engaging in the Conduct of a Bodhisattva*, chap. 9, v. 151ab, (Toh. 3871), Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. La, p. 72, lines 5–6.
147. That is, the models that apply to both the Hīnayāna approach of the śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha and the more common interpretations in the Mahāyāna approach, that is, the Cittamātra and Svātantrika Madhyamaka schools.
148. That is, in the śrāvaka approach one does not contemplate the Four Truths simply as a set of four topics, but analyzes each of them according to their specific implications; see note 85 for the sixteen topics associated with the truths.
149. Here Kongtrul is presenting the standard formula, that of the two aspects of the lack of identity; spiritually advanced śrāvakas realize the lack of identity in the individual personality (“50 percent” of the total situation), and spiritually advanced pratyekabuddhas realize, in addition, the lack of identity in phenomena perceived as objects (“75 percent”), while spiritually advanced bodhisattvas realize, in addition, the lack of identity in the phenomena associated with the subjective perceiver (“100 percent”).
150. That is, the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka school, and especially the writings of Candrakīrti.
151. See note 114.
152. That is, Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, and Candrakīrti. Within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, Candrakīrti is regarded as having been largely responsible for developing the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka interpretation.
153. In his *Entrance into the Middle Way*, chap. 1, v. 8 (Toh. 3861, Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. 'A, p. 402, l. 7 through p. 403, l. 1), Candrakīrti asserts that śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas do realize the lack of identity in phenomena. This has given rise to a certain amount of controversy as to whether Candrakīrti's intention was that they realize this lack of identity completely or only partially (to the extent that it allows the consequent realization of the lack of identity in the individual personality). It has been the usual position of the Kagyü and Nyingma schools (with which Kongtrul was most closely aligned) that the latter was the case.
154. That is, primarily the śrāvaka approach (given the Vaibhāṣika source cited below), whose interpretation of the path of seeing on the relative level corresponds in large part with the ordinary Mahāyāna approach. See note 147.
155. That is, the extraordinary Mahāyāna approach of the Madhyamaka school, whose multiple interpretations of the ultimate level of reality are quite different from those of the śrāvaka approach.
156. That is, the first of the Four Truths of spiritually advanced beings, that of suffering.
157. Vasubandhu, *Treasury of Abhidharma*, chap. 6, vv. 25cd–26, (Toh. 4089), Dg. T., mNgon pa, vol. Ku, p. 38, lines 4–5.
158. These four stages as they apply to the Truth of suffering are as follows:

- (1) Patient acceptance that produces an understanding of the truth of suffering takes place in the wake of the highest mundane experience. It entails an acute perception of suffering as it is experienced in the realm of desire and constitutes what is known as the “pathway without obstacles,” the antidote to factors that are to be eliminated on the path of seeing.
- (2) This acceptance ushers in an actual understanding of suffering, which entails an acute perception of suffering as it is experienced in the realm of desire that constitutes the “pathway of complete freedom,” in which the corresponding factors to be eliminated on the path of seeing are eliminated and one experiences the result of one’s mind’s being freed of these factors.
- (3) Patient acceptance that produces a subsequent understanding of suffering entails an acute perception of suffering as it is experienced in the two higher realms (of form and formlessness) and constitutes what is known as the “pathway without obstacles,” the antidote to factors that are to be eliminated on the path of seeing.
- (4) This acceptance ushers in a subsequent understanding of suffering, which entails an acute perception of suffering as it is experienced in the two higher realms (of form and formlessness) that constitutes the “pathway of complete freedom,” in which the corresponding factors to be eliminated on the path of seeing are eliminated and one experiences the result of one’s mind’s being freed of these factors. Each of these four steps removes certain factors to be eliminated on the path of seeing; the same progression applies to the remaining three truths.
159. Ibid., vv. 28 and 31b, (Toh. 4089), Dg. T., mNgon pa, vol. Ku, p. 38, lines 6–7.
160. Four apply to the Four Truths as they concern the realm of desire, four to these truths as they concern the two higher realms.
161. This term refers to the factor that serves as the antidote that eliminates the obscurations specific to a given situation, thus ensuring that there are no obstacles to furthering the awakening of the experience of timeless awareness in the future.
162. That is, the “extraordinary interpretation” referred to above; this includes both the Svāntarika and Prāsaṅgika branches of the Madhyamaka school.
163. The term is *skad cig* (literally, “instant”) since in this interpretation the “path” of seeing is a single instant of transformative insight.
164. The implication of this is that in perceiving the true nature of any given phenomenon, one perceives the true nature of all phenomena, there being no difference between these perceptions.
165. What is seen on the first step is not different from what is seen in succeeding moments of the path of seeing or even on the path of meditation, but what is seen initially becomes clearer and its implications more evident with familiarization; otherwise, the definition of the path of seeing as the first direct experience of the true nature of reality would be undermined.
166. Haribhadra, *Major Commentary on the Transcendent Perfection of Sublime Intelligence in Eight Thousand Verses*, (Toh. 3791) Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Cha, ff. 1b–341a.
167. Abhayākara Gupta, *Adornment of the Sage’s Intent* (Toh. 3903), Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. A, ff. 73b–293a.
168. There are eight stages recognized in the śrāvaka approach: (1) initial entrance into and (2) stable abiding in the fruition state of a stream-winner; (3) initial entrance into and (4) stable abiding in the fruition state of a once-returner; (5) initial

entrance into and (6) stable abiding in the fruition state of a nonreturner; and (7) initial entrance into and (8) stable abiding in the fruition state of an arhat. These are discussed below.

169. That is, the interpretations that state that the path of seeing is a single step, or instant, are presented in such a way that they do not categorically contradict the models positing multiple steps. It is a question of the acumen of the one experiencing the path of seeing, rather than a hard and fast rule, that decides which model is appropriate.
170. Literally, "instant" (Tib. *skad cig*). The Abhidharma teachings define two kinds of "instants." An "instant that is the smallest unit of time" is a fixed measure of an extremely short time, defined as one-sixty-fifth of the time it takes a healthy man in his prime to snap his fingers. An "instant that is the time needed to complete some function" is of variable duration, defined by the time it takes for the function in question to be carried out to completion.
171. That is, the Madhyamaka school of the Mahāyāna approach.
172. That is, while phenomena seem in our ordinary perception to be produced by other causes and conditions, ultimately no "thing" is produced.
173. That is, from the perspective of the ultimate level, or what is experienced by a spiritually advanced being on the path of seeing during formal meditative equipoise, according to this extraordinary interpretation.
174. Source not identified.
175. That is, the "subsequent understanding" that constitutes the last in the succession of the sixteen steps of the path of seeing.
176. That is, the perception, during formal meditative equipoise on the path of seeing, of production or produced phenomena as things that exist in the ultimate sense.
177. That is, unwise in the sense of failing to understand the way things actually abide according to their ultimate nature and continuing to impute the existence of something that does not ultimately exist.
178. That is, being thus composite and conditioned, things are not seen to be existent once one has attained the path of seeing. With the subsequent understanding of phenomena that ensues, there is no longer even any point in further examination to determine that they do not exist as such. The line in the source reads slightly differently: "would not have seen the significance of how things occur conditionally." Nāgārjuna, *Sixty Verses of Reasoning*, vv. 11cd–12, (Toh. 3825), Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. Tsa, p. 40, l. 7 through p. 41, l. 1.
179. This term refers in general to any school of thought that imputes true existence to things to any degree whatsoever. In the Buddhist context, only the Prāsaṅgika branch of the Madhyamaka school completely avoids this error, and so the reference here is to the earlier schools of Buddhist thought that posited a path of seeing composed of multiple steps.
180. Nāgārjuna, *Source Verses on Sublime Intelligence*, chap. 1, v. 1, (Toh. 3824), Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. Tsa, p. 2, lines 3–4.
181. The source reads "are seen through sheer ignorance." Ibid., chap. 21, v. 11. (Toh. 3824), Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. Tsa, p. 24, lines 4–5.
182. *Request of Anavatapta*, (Toh. 156), Dg. K., mDo sde, vol. Pha, p. 227, lines 6–7. The lines in the source read as follows:

Whatever is produced conditionally is not, in fact, produced;
it is not, in essence, produced.

Whatever relies on circumstances is taught as being empty.

Whoever understands this to be emptiness is prudent.

183. The quotation is taken from Nāgārjuna's *Seventy Verses on Emptiness*, v. 70, (Toh. 3827), Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. Tsa, p. 52, l. 6. The text as cited by Kongtrul differs in some respects from the source, which reads:
 Do not refute the mundane habit of saying,
 "Depending on that, this occurs."
 But since whatever is interdependent has no independent nature,
 how could it exist? That much is certain.
184. The passage is cited from Nāgārjuna's *Source Verses on Sublime Intelligence*, chap. 24, v. 19, (Toh. 3824), Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. Tsa, p. 29, lines 6–7.
185. Maitreya, *Ornament of the Sūtras*, chap. 7, v. 7cd, (Toh. 3786), Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, p. 12, l. 5.
186. These are fears to which bodhisattvas on the paths of accumulation and linkage are still subject: the fear of being without livelihood, the fear of losing people's respect, the fear that comes from mistrusting those in one's retinue (that is, the fear that one will lose material support due to a lack of loyalty), the fear of dying, and the fear of taking rebirth in a lower state.
187. These twelve qualities are listed below.
188. The "elaboration" referred to is that imposed by the concepts that arise in dualistic consciousness.
189. The term "approach of purity" refers to a path that leads one to greater happiness in this and future lifetimes and higher states of rebirth within saṃsāra. While this is considered an inferior aim, it is acknowledged for the benefits it brings, however temporary. Jamgön Kongtrul discusses this approach in the third and final section of Book 6, Part 1 of the *Treasury of Knowledge* (translation by Gyurme Dorje, Snow Lion Publications, forthcoming).
190. The text actually states "144," which, given the following source verse, would seem to be in error. However, it is worth noting that a possible explanation for the figure of 144 at this point may lie in the fact that some of the earlier Indian Buddhist schools with more materialist tendencies classified the factors to be eliminated into different categories, depending on whether they were considered substantially existent or merely conceptual imputations.
191. The eightfold path consists of authentic view, authentic thought, authentic speech, authentic activity, authentic livelihood, authentic effort, authentic mindfulness, and authentic meditative absorption.
192. These are called the "six primary afflictive states": ignorance, desire, anger, pride, doubt, and fixated beliefs (specifically, holding the transitory mind-body aggregates to constitute something real).
193. A reference to certain gods in the realm of form, whose particular circumstances of rebirth are such that they spend their entire lifetime (which may extend for many eons) in a state of trance, with no conscious experience taking place until that of their death and subsequent fall into some lower state of rebirth.

194. A reference to the gods of the realm of formlessness.
195. See note 46.
196. The practice of meditation involving calm abiding and deeper insight is not unique to Buddhism, although Buddhist meditation theory involves principles (such as the lack of identity in the individual and phenomena) that are not found in other systems. It is possible through such abiding and insight to attain such advanced states of mundane realization for one to be reborn in the highest state among the gods of the realm of formlessness—the “pinnacle of conditioned existence,” also known as the state of “Neither Perception Nor Nonperception”—and from that vantage point to conclude that there is no higher goal to strive for, and thus to have no sense of an alternative that transcends the limitations imposed by conditioned states of being.
197. Both the “lower” and “higher” schools of Abhidharma (as represented by the *Treasury of Abhidharma* and the *Compendium of Abhidharma*, respectively) consider the first of the four stages of meditative stability associated with the realm of form to have three components—in addition to the actual first stage per se (also called the “nominal aspect of the first level”), there is a preparatory phase and a distinctive phase. The other three stages are simply the actual stages themselves.
198. That is, the first three of the four states in this realm. Because of the experiences undergone by beings reborn in these states, they are called “Infinite Space,” “Infinite Consciousness,” and “Nothingness.”
199. That is, their minds are still too subject to the influences of afflictive states to gain the necessary abiding and insight to progress to states within the realms of form and formlessness.
200. That is, the second, third, and fourth levels; the preparatory stage of the first level is included in the nine levels of the path of meditation in the śrāvaka approach.
201. See, for example, *Ornament of Manifest Realization*, chap. 5, vv. 23 and 25 (Toh. 3786), Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Ka. p. 19, lines 4–5 and 6:

Then, resting in the equipoise of the meditative absorption of the majestic lion,

one gains realization of the process of interdependent origination,
as it usually progresses and as it can be reversed. . . .

. . . resting in equipoise while progressing of leaps and bounds,
one progresses to a state of cessation in different ways,
skipping the first, second, third, fourth, fifth,
sixth, seventh, or eighth levels.

Buddhist teachings recognize several different types of individuals. Those practitioners who make an instantaneous leap of understanding from ignorance to enlightenment do not need to follow a developmental path. They are, however, exceedingly rare; the standard example is the Indian king Indrabhūti, who attained enlightenment upon receiving empowerment from the Buddha Śākyamuni, who manifested in the form of a sambhogakāya buddha. These individuals are able to make such a leap in this lifetime only because they are predisposed through having undergone training on a vast scale in previous lifetimes. Other types of practitioners progress developmentally (the “majestic lion,” a reference to the way in which a lion proceeds deliberately and methodically, pausing occasionally to look back

- over the terrain it has covered) or in leaps and bounds (“skipping over” certain stages; occasionally this term can even imply someone whose progress is uneven, sometimes progressing and sometimes regressing); for these types of individuals, a developmental path is essential.
202. That is, as before, this includes all schools up to and including the Svātantrika Madhyamaka school.
203. That is, that of the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka school.
204. Thus, the initial realization of the actual nature of phenomena that takes place on the path of seeing does not undergo any substantive change during the path of meditation. What “changes” is one’s degree of familiarization with that realization and the scope and implications of that increasing familiarity. This is comparable to seeing a map of an area at first glance, then looking it over again and again to gain a growing familiarity with its details. The scope of the actual nature of phenomena (as the “quasi-object”) being omnipresent, that of timeless awareness (as the “quasi-subject”) is equally omnipresent. One implication of this passage is that the classification of the levels of realization on the path of meditation is based not on what is experienced in formal meditative equipoise but rather on the qualities that are developed in postmeditation awareness.
205. This is a reference to afflictive states, which trap one’s mind into a complacency with conditioned states of existence in saṃsāra, so that one continues to commit negative actions that perpetuate suffering.
206. Maitreya, *Ornament of the Sūtras*, chap. 14, v. 5, (Toh. 4020), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 34, lines 6–7.
207. The source reads:
- because the focus is no different than *the truth* that is described as being directly perceived through the path of seeing.
- Haribhadra, *Shorter Commentary on the “Ornament of Manifest Realization,”* (Toh. 3793), Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Ja, p. 169, lines 4–5 (emphasis mine).
208. That is, the enlightenment of a śrāvaka arhat or a pratyekabuddha.
209. The Tibetan term for “meditation” (*sgom pa*) is cognate to that for “familiarization” (*goms pa*).
210. There is a definite progression to the way in which each of the five paths functions as one of four kinds of antidote. The paths of accumulation and linkage function as “antidotes involving direct confrontation,” the paths of seeing and meditation as “antidotes involving elimination,” and the path of consummation as the “antidote involving distancing.” The “antidote as the underlying ground” is not a path but the primordially pure way in which all phenomena abide according to their true nature.
211. A reference to the final limit of the continuum of spiritual development, the final phase of the tenth spiritual level at the very end of the path of meditation, immediately prior to the attainment of the path of no more training, or buddhahood.
212. That is, the most subtle level of afflictive obscurations. There are varying opinions concerning the process whereby the obscurations are eliminated, but the usual model has the more obvious, conceptually based aspects of the afflictive and cognitive obscurations being eliminated on the path of seeing and the more subtle, instinctive aspects being eliminated on the path of meditation.

213. In such contexts, authentic speech is able to answer objections or doubts without error, and so inspire confidence. Authentic activity entails the avoidance of any and all harmful actions and the upholding of pure spiritual discipline. Authentic livelihood is one that involves no duplicity or deceit in one's words or deeds. Authentic meditative absorption serves as an antidote to anything that hinders the development of deeper levels of insight and other distinctive qualities. Authentic mindfulness serves as an antidote to the attainment of calm abiding and deeper insight. Authentic view is that of nonconceptual timeless awareness and the subsequent pure insight that it produces. Authentic thought is contemplation of the meaning of teachings found in the sūtras and other sources. Authentic diligence allows one to cultivate meditation over a long time without becoming discouraged—meditation that serves as the antidote to the cognitive obscurations and the factors to be eliminated on the path of meditation.
214. Of these five incorruptible components, the first three constitute the eight branches of the eightfold path of noble ones and can be equated with the higher training in discipline. The utterly liberated state of mind constitutes the higher training in meditative absorption, epitomized by the culmination of training in calm abiding. The utterly liberated state of sublime intelligence constitutes the higher training in sublime intelligence, epitomized by the culmination of training in deeper insight.
215. That is, the Cittamātra and Svātantrika Madhyamaka schools.
216. That is, one on the path of meditation who will awaken in that lifetime to the path of consummation—buddhahood—as did the Buddha Śākyamuni.
217. See sGam.po.pa, *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, 24, n. 13: "As long as Buddhism flourished in India, the central country was Budhgaya, where The Buddha attained enlightenment . . . a central country [is] any place where spiritual values are alive."
218. The Buddha Śākyamuni, for example, was born into the *kṣatriya*, or warrior, class in the central region of northern India.
219. That is, the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka school.
220. That is, up to and including the Svātantrika Madhyamaka school.
221. That is, the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka school.
222. The Sanskrit term "nirvāṇa" has several connotations. In the śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha approaches, it signifies a personal release from suffering, resulting in the state of quiescence experienced by an arhat. From the Mahāyāna perspective, such a low-level nirvāṇa is a static state devoid of the capacity to benefit others and is limited to that extreme of personal salvation. The Mahāyāna definition of nirvāṇa is of a transcendence of either of two extremes, that of continued bondage to the conditioned state of saṃsāra on the one hand, and that of mere personal release (at the expense of others' welfare) on the other.
223. In general, both the afflictive and cognitive obscurations are considered to be hindrances to liberation, but in the Mahāyāna approach the afflictive obscurations are specifically hindrances to liberation, while the cognitive obscurations are hindrances to the attainment of omniscience.
224. That is, śrāvaka arhats, pratyekabuddha arhats, and buddhas, respectively.
225. That is, the scope of realization increases from the level of a śrāvaka arhat to that of a pratyekabuddha, to that of a bodhisattva. There are different systems of cosmology in the Buddhist tradition, depending on the particular level of teachings. In the general Mahāyāna context, one thousand world systems such as our own constitute the first-order universe (a "thousandfold universe"); a thousand of these universes

(that is, a million world systems) constitute the second order (a “two-thousand-fold universe”); and a thousand of these further universes (that is, a billion world systems) constitute the third order (a “three-thousandfold universe”). There are countless three-thousandfold universes throughout the entire range of saṃsāra. See Kongtrul, *Treasury of Knowledge: Book One: Myriad Worlds*, 102–5; Vasubandhu, *Treasury of Abhidharma*, chap. 7, vv. 55ab, (Toh. 4089), Dg. T., mNgon pa, vol. Ku, p. 46, lines 4–5.

226. That is, in the case of a buddha.
227. These qualities are discussed in Book 10, Part 1.
228. That is, the antidote that involves distancing.
229. That is, up to and including the Svātantrika Madhyamaka school.
230. There are three incorruptible faculties that function in the minds of spiritually advanced beings on one or another of the three higher paths (that is, those of seeing, meditation, and no more training). The “faculty that brings all-knowing awareness” is that which brings knowledge of everything that (due to the factors to be eliminated on the path of seeing) one did not know previously. This faculty is experienced once these factors have been eliminated through the agency of nine controlling powers experienced by spiritually advanced beings: (1)–(5) five powers associated with the completely refined state of enlightenment (faith, diligence, mindfulness, meditative absorption, and sublime intelligence), those involving (6) a physical and (7) mental sense of well-being, and (8) a state of impartiality, and (9) the mental faculty associated with the coordinating function of mind.
231. The second of the three incorruptible faculties is the “faculty of all-knowing awareness,” which is experienced by spiritually advanced beings on the path of meditation, with the foregoing nine faculties having brought about a clear distinction between counterproductive influences and their antidotes.
232. The third of the three incorruptible faculties is the “faculty endowed with all-knowing awareness,” which is experienced by spiritually advanced beings on the path of no more training, with the foregoing nine faculties having eliminated, without exception, all the “instinctive” afflictive states still experienced on the paths of seeing and meditation, thus endowing one with timeless awareness that is in no way subject to any corruptibility. Vasubandhu, *Treasury of Abhidharma*, chap. 2, v. 4, (Toh. 4089), Dg. T., mNgon pa, vol. Ku, p. 7, l. 3.
233. The former system is emphasized in the approaches of śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas; the latter in the bodhisattva approach, although this system also uses the terminology “freedom from attachment,” which in the bodhisattva approach refers to all levels but that of buddhahood.
234. Though the terms are identical, this is a subcategory within the major level of freedom from attachment.
235. That is, an arhat.
236. That is, for a śrāvaka practitioner to become a Mahāyāna practitioner.
237. That is, the four states of a stream-winner, a once-returner, a nonreturner, and an arhat, when further classified, in each case, into the two stages of initial entrance into, and stable abiding in, the respective state.
238. “Stream-winner” is a term used to describe spiritually advanced beings of the śrāvaka approach who have eliminated the eighty-eight factors to be eliminated on the path of seeing (see note 135), while not yet having eliminated the factors to be eliminated on the path of meditation.

239. "Once-returner" is a term used to describe spiritually advanced beings of the śrāvaka approach who have eliminated the six factors associated with the realm of desire that are to be eliminated on the path of meditation. These six factors are: ignorance, desire-attachment, anger, pride, and the "instinctive" beliefs in the reality of the transitory mind-body aggregates and of absolutes. Because there are still afflictive obscurations present as factors to be eliminated in the minds of once-returners, preventing them from attaining nirvāṇa (as defined in the śrāvaka approach), they must take rebirth once more in the realm of desire within saṃsāra in order to eliminate those remaining factors.
240. "Nonreturner" is a term used to describe spiritually advanced beings of the śrāvaka approach who have eliminated all factors associated with the realm of desire that are to be eliminated on the path of meditation, and so will not be reborn in ("return to") the realm of desire.
241. The Sanskrit term "arhat" (worthy one) is translated into Tibetan as *dgra bcom pa* (one who has vanquished the foes), a reference to the fact that the inner "foes" of the afflictive states and other factors to be eliminated on the path of meditation have been completely "vanquished," or eliminated.
242. That is, initial entrance into the states of a once-returner, a nonreturner, and an arhat.
243. These are factors that contribute to the attainment of any of the three levels of enlightenment—that of śrāvakas, that of pratyekabuddhas, or the unsurpassable enlightenment of buddhahood attained by bodhisattvas. These thirty-seven factors are:
 (1)–(4) the four applications of mindfulness,
 (5)–(8) the four aspects of correct renunciation,
 (9)–(12) the four bases of supernormal powers,
 (13)–(17) the five controlling powers associated with the completely refined state of enlightenment,
 (18)–(22) the five strengths associated with the completely refined state of enlightenment,
 (23)–(29) the seven adjuncts to enlightenment, and
 (30)–(37) the eightfold path of noble ones.
244. For a more detailed discussion of the pratyekabuddha approach, see Longchenpa, *The Precious Treasury of Philosophical Systems*, 142–49.
245. That is, that of the individual personality and phenomena.
246. Nāgārjuna, *Precious Garland*, chap. 5, v. 40, (Toh. 4158), Dg. T., sPrin yig, vol. Ge, p. 246, lines 2–3.
247. Kongtrul cites this text later (under its longer title the *Concise Summary of the Wheel of Time, the Sublimely Unchanging State*) as part of the Kālacakra cycle. The title as cited is a reference to Puṇḍarīka, *Stainless Light*, Toh. (1347), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Da. See p. 511, l. 3:

In this context, the levels are twofold: the level of freedom from desire and the level of completely perfect buddhahood.

248. That is, the system of the śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha approaches and that of the bodhisattva approach.
249. Having initially established that there are two systems of levels (those of the śrāvakas and those of the bodhisattvas), Kongtrul adopts a style of referring to them

- as “former” and “latter”; for the sake of clarity, I have identified them throughout his discussion.
250. That is, the five states of deeper discernment; see note 43. Knowledge of the exhaustion of all that is corruptible is knowledge of which afflictive states have, or have not yet, been eliminated as one progresses along the paths of seeing and meditation, and the corresponding experience of timeless awareness.
251. The source reads “constantly.”
252. Maitreya, *Ornament of the Sūtras*, chap. 21, v. 39, (Toh. 4020), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 74, l. 7 through p. 75, l. 1.
253. Ibid., v. 40, (Toh. 4020), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 75, l. 1.
254. Traditionally the term refers to the elements of earth, water, fire, air, and space, held to be the “raw material” of the physical world we inhabit.
255. In particular the teachings based on the sixteen topics of the Four Truths of nobles ones.
256. The ten kinds of spiritual activity are: copying scriptures, making offerings, giving generously, listening to spiritual teachings, memorizing them, reading them, explaining them, reciting them aloud, reflecting on their meaning, and meditating on their meaning.
257. Ibid., v. 41, (Toh. 4020), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 75, lines 2–3.
258. Ibid., v. 24, (Toh. 4020), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 73, lines 4–5.
259. See Vasubandhu’s commentary on this verse and the two following ones in his *Explanation of the “Ornament of the Sūtras,”* (Toh. 4026), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 506, lines 1–6:

There are three verses that classify the levels on the basis of spiritual attainment:

One should understand all these levels to be ones
in which spiritual attainment has or has not truly come about.
Even the ones in which there is attainment are held to be ones
in which it both has or has not come about.
As for the attainment, it is due to one’s using mental processes
as defined by the classification of the levels.
Because these are understood to be conceptual,
and because this understanding itself is nonconceptual, one knows this
to be attainment.
Because they are experienced by an individual’s awareness
and are the domain of buddhas,
meditation and spiritual attainment on the levels
are inconceivable to the ordinary mind.

That is to say, on the level of dedicated intent spiritual attainment has not yet come about, whereas it nominally has on the remaining levels, which is the sense in which the source refers to “all these levels.” Of those on which attainment nominally takes place, it does not truly take place on seven, but truly does on the remaining ones [that is, the eighth, ninth, and tenth] because one has entered a state in which there is no longer any overt process of ordinary mental patterning.

In any case, the foregoing discussion was of the Utterly Joyful One

involving spiritual attainment, and that attainment is due to one's using mental processes as defined by the classification of the levels. One should be aware of this, because the classification of the levels is understood to be merely conceptual, and because that understanding is itself not thought of in a conceptual way. At whatever point there is the understanding that the classification of the levels is merely a conceptual model, and one does not think of those mere concepts in a conceptual way, one has thus gained timeless awareness that does not involve the dualistic concepts of object and subject. It is therefore explained that the level has truly been attained.

In addition, in all such cases of the levels, the meditation and the spiritual attainment are both inconceivable to the ordinary mind. These are to be experienced by the individual awareness of bodhisattvas and are the domain of buddhas, not of anyone else.

260. Ibid., chap. 12, v. 75cd, (Toh. 4020), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 31, l. 6. The text as cited by Kongtrul differs from the standard source in meter, but not in substance.
261. That is, the extremes of saṃsāra and a limited nirvāṇa of personal salvation from suffering.
262. On the eighth level all afflictive obscurations, even the most subtle and "instinctive," have been completely eliminated; henceforth, one's progress through the last three "pure" levels of the path of meditation is effortless, as the remaining subtle traces of cognitive obscurations are eliminated.
263. These are aspects of a bodhisattva's unerring discernment of phenomena. "Authentic discernment of spiritual teachings" is the precise knowledge of teachings according to their specific characteristics. "Authentic discernment of meanings" is the precise knowledge of phenomena in all their distinct variety. "Authentic discernment of language" is the precise knowledge of the languages of beings, so that one can convey multiple meanings with a single word and can speak words that delight spiritually advanced beings, without imprecision, unclarity, or verbosity. "Authentic discernment of poise" is the ability to dispel one's own doubts by hearing teachings from others, to dispel others' doubts through one's own teachings, and to speak meaningfully and without hesitation in melodious tones.
264. These are referred to briefly in Maitreya, *Ornament of Manifest Realization*, chap. 1, vv. 49–51 (Toh. 3786), Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, p. 6, l. 7 through p. 7, l. 2. These ten are:
 - 1) in accord with the arousal of the awakening attitude, or bodhicitta, to be free of fickleness, deceit, or selfish vested interest in all the positive activities that are the foundation of the Mahāyāna approach;
 - 2) to follow the Mahāyāna approach and strive for the experience of timeless awareness, which aids in the attainment of dharmakāya (for one's own benefit) and rūpakāya (for the benefit of others);
 - 3) to cultivate one-pointedly the four immeasurable attitudes (of love, compassion, joy, and impartiality) toward all beings equally;
 - 4) to be unstintingly generous in sharing all one's possessions without avarice or attachment, in order to help others;
 - 5) to rely on spiritual mentors who inspire one to attain the omniscient state of enlightenment;

- 6) to uphold the principles of the teachings found in the three approaches of the śrāvaka, pratyekabuddha, and bodhisattva;
- 7) to hold constantly to the certainty of one's release from all factors that obstruct one's attainment of liberation and enlightenment;
- 8) to take delight in one's desire to attain the unsurpassable kāyas of buddhahood for the sake of others, and to dedicate one's efforts toward that end;
- 9) to impart the sacred teachings to others without holding back (teachings on the arousal of bodhicitta initially, on cultivating the nonreferential state of sublime intelligence in the interim, and on dedicating one's virtue to the attainment of unsurpassable enlightenment by all beings); and
- 10) always to speak the truth for the benefit of others.

See Rigdzin, *Tibetan-English Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology*, 430.

265. Maitreya, *Ornament of Manifest Realization*, chap. 1, v. 52 (Toh. 3786), Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, p. 7, l. 2. These eight are:
- 1) to observe the three kinds of discipline (discipline that stems from one's resolve to avoid harmful behavior, discipline that ensures one's consolidation of all positive qualities that contribute to one's own enlightenment, and discipline that ensures the welfare of others;
 - 2) to feel gratitude for and repay any kindness shown to one by another, however small;
 - 3) to have forbearance for any harm done to one by another, or for any suffering one undergoes in saṃsāra, or for any challenge presented to one by profound teachings;
 - 4) to take great delight in any action of a positive nature, without any regret or hesitation;
 - 5) to have great love and compassion for other beings, wishing them happiness and freedom from suffering;
 - 6) to honor and show respect for all of one's spiritual mentors and teachers;
 - 7) to listen to and put into practice the teachings given by them; and
 - 8) to engage in the transcendent perfections in order to bring other beings to spiritual maturity.

See Rigdzin, *Tibetan-English Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology*, 430–31.

266. Maitreya, *Ornament of Manifest Realization*, chap. 1, vv. 53–54ab (Toh. 3786), Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, p. 7, lines 2–3. These five are:
- 1) to be insatiable in listening to teachings (in order to refine one's own understanding);
 - 2) to share teachings with others with no thought for personal reward (in order to refine the understanding of others);
 - 3) to dedicate the virtue of one's accomplishments in order to ensure the circumstances for one to experience a pure realm in the future and train beings from that perspective;
 - 4) to engage in helping others unflaggingly, without becoming discouraged even though one sees the flaws of saṃsāra and is not rewarded by others for one's efforts; and
 - 5) to have self-respect (which governs one's own actions) and modesty (which governs one's awareness of the opinion others have of one).

See Rigdzin, *Tibetan-English Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology*, 431.

267. Maitreya, *Ornament of Manifest Realization*, chap. 1, vv. 54cd–55 (Toh. 3786), Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, p. 7, lines 3–4. These ten are:
- 1) to dwell in the solitudes of forests and hermitages, holding to the ideals of śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas;
 - 2) to have few wants, with no overt desire to gain what one has not yet acquired;
 - 3) to enjoy contentment, with no urge to gain more than one already has;
 - 4) to develop and rely on the twelve disciplines involved in spiritual training. These disciplines exemplify an ascetic lifestyle devoted to spiritual practice; three relate to diet (eating food given as alms, eating only one meal a day, and not eating after mid-day); three relate to clothing (wearing rough cloth, wearing old cloth, and wearing the three monastic robes); four relate to dwellings (staying in solitary places, under trees in the forest, in places without roofs, and in charnel grounds); and two relate to conduct (sleeping in an upright position and staying wherever one finds oneself, without paying attention to physical comforts);
 - 5) to observe one's discipline and training for the sake of others, without concern for one's life or health;
 - 6) to disregard sensory pleasures, understanding their shortcomings;
 - 7) to lead others to nirvāṇa according to their individual levels of understanding;
 - 8) to be generous in giving away one's possessions in order to benefit others;
 - 9) to never lack determination in seeking enlightenment for the sake of others; and
 - 10) to avoid conceiving of things by fixating on their ordinary characteristics.
- See Rigdzin, *Tibetan-English Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology*, 431.
268. Maitreya, *Ornament of Manifest Realization*, chap. 1, vv. 56–57 (Toh. 3786), Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, p. 7, lines 4–5. These ten are:
- 1) to avoid association with mundane people for the sake of gain or honors;
 - 2) to avoid selfish feelings about one's happiness that would cause one to withhold opportunities for such happiness from others;
 - 3) to stay in places that are free of busyness;
 - 4) to avoid selfish concerns, thus counteracting one's desire for praise and gain;
 - 5) to avoid defaming others out of envy;
 - 6) to avoid harmful actions and any tendencies that could contribute to these;
 - 7) to avoid concerns for one's self-importance, thus preventing pride in one's own achievements and lack of respect for those deserving of it;
 - 8) to understand the nature of moral choices, so as to avoid misinterpreting which actions are positive or negative;
 - 9) to develop sublime intelligence that can discern the actual nature of phenomena and so avoid inaccurate views and other ignoble states of mind; and
 - 10) to avoid reinforcing afflictive states and any tendencies contributing to them.
- See Rigdzin, *Tibetan-English Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology*, 431–32.
269. Maitreya, *Ornament of Manifest Realization*, chap. 1, vv. 58–59 (Toh. 3786), Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, p. 7, lines 5–6. Of these twelve, six involve developing the transcendent perfections and six involve eliminating flaws as a result of that development. They are:
- 1) developing the transcendent perfection of generosity,
 - 2) and so ridding oneself of selfish vested interests;
 - 3) developing the transcendent perfection of discipline,

- 4) and so eliminating any complacency with the goal of a śrāvaka or pratyekabuddha;
- 5) developing the transcendent perfection of forbearance toward profound teachings,
- 6) and so eliminating any attitude of hesitation concerning the true nature of things being free of all conceptual elaborations;
- 7) developing the transcendent perfection of diligence, taking delight in giving away all one's possessions,
- 8) and so eliminating faintheartedness and overcoming one's avarice;
- 9) developing the transcendent perfection of meditative stability that is focused one-pointedly on the welfare of others,
- 10) and so eliminating any covetous attitudes toward one's possessions, which would interfere with one's perfection of generosity;
- 11) developing the transcendent perfection of sublime intelligence, especially as it concerns the spiritual path,
- 12) and so eliminating any attitude of avoiding being generous toward others, even if one is oneself impoverished.

See Rigdzin, *Tibetan-English Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology*, 432–33.

270. These kinds of training are counted as twenty pairings of some factor to be eliminated and some antidote to be used, or as forty kinds of training if counted individually. Maitreya, *Ornament of Manifest Realization*, chap. 1, vv. 60–66 (Toh. 3786), Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, p. 7, l. 6 through p. 8, l. 3. The first group of twenty consists of the elimination of ways in which the mind fixates naïvely on (1) self-interest, (2) ordinary beings, (3) life force, (4) individual personalities, (5) nihilistic denial, (6) naïve affirmation, (7) the subtle traits of things, (8) causes, (9) the mind-body aggregates, (10) the components of ordinary experience, (11) the sense fields, (12) the three realms as states to be maintained, (13) the three realms as states to be rejected, (14) states of discouragement, (15) attachment to buddhahood, (16) attachment to the teachings of the Buddhadharma, (17) attachment to the saṅgha, (18) attachment to one's moral discipline, (19) contentions concerning emptiness, and (20) seeming contradictions between emptiness and the relative level. The second group of twenty consists of developing the following antidotes: (1) understanding emptiness, (2) understanding that things ultimately have no subtle traits, (3) understanding that ordinary phenomena are unreliable, (4) realization of the innate purity underlying the three focal points of subject, object, and their interrelationship, (5) supreme compassion, (6) lack of self-importance, (7) realization of the equalness of all phenomena, (8) understanding of the ultimate spiritual approach, (9) understanding of the ultimate lack of origination, (10) understanding that brings forbearance in the face of the challenge of profound truths, (11) understanding that phenomena lack true existence, (12) eliminating concepts based on the belief that things truly exist per se, (13) eliminating both concepts based on investing things with subtle traits and belief in the reality of the transitory mind-body aggregates, (14) focusing one's mind on omniscience with one-pointed calm abiding, (15) becoming skilled in deeper insight, (16) taming one's mind through familiarity with the true nature of things, (17) timeless awareness that is unhindered in knowing all phenomena, (18) understanding that there is no context for believing in any given phenomenon having true existence, (19)

freedom to move at will from one buddha realm to another, and (20) ability to manifest in whatever form one wishes.

See Rigdzin, *Tibetan-English Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology*, 433–34.

271. These are three aspects of meditative absorption that bring about the attainment of complete liberation. They are associated with the Cittamātrīn position that all that is knowable is subsumed under the three headings of imputation, dependence, and the absolute. The three avenues are:

- (1) emptiness as an avenue to complete liberation, which is the realization that conceptually imputed phenomena do not exist;
- (2) the absence of subtle traits as an avenue to complete liberation, which is the realization that what is absolute and unconditioned has no subtle traits such as shape, color, and so on;
- (3) the absence of naïve assumption as an avenue to complete liberation, which is the elimination of reliance on dependent, conditioned phenomena due to the knowledge that such reliance produces only suffering.

On these three avenues, see Longchen Rabjam, *The Precious Treasury of Philosophical Systems*, 145:

Of the three avenues to complete liberation that concern the knowable, emptiness is the nonexistence of a self; the absence of characteristics is the nonexistence of anything the self takes to be its own; and the absence of naïve assumption is a nonreferential state. In terms of the path, of the three avenues to complete liberation, emptiness is the truth of cessation; the absence of characteristics is the truth of the path; and the absence of naïve assumption constitutes the truths of suffering and its universal origin. In terms of the fruition, of the three avenues to liberation, emptiness and the absence of characteristics pertain to the state in which there are no residual traces, whereas the absence of naïve assumption pertains to the state that still involves residual traces.

272. Maitreya, *Ornament of Manifest Realization*, chap. 1, vv. 67–68 (Toh. 3786), Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, p. 8, lines 3–4. These are:

- 1) knowledge of the thoughts in the minds of all other beings;
- 2) knowledge of the realms in which buddhas abide;
- 3) establishment of such realms;
- 4) delighting buddhas with one's realization of the nature of all phenomena, just as it is;
- 5) knowledge of the capabilities and acumen of beings;
- 6) purifying the experience of beings who will attain buddha realms;
- 7) carrying out all the conduct of a bodhisattva while abiding in the meditative absorption that understands all as being illusion-like; and
- 8) consciously taking rebirth in order to ensure benefit for beings.

See Rigdzin, *Tibetan-English Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology*, 434–35.

273. Maitreya, *Ornament of Manifest Realization*, chap. 1, vv. 69–70 (Toh. 3786), Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, p. 8, lines 4–5. These are:

- 1) ensuring the accomplishment of infinite prayers of aspiration;
- 2) understanding the individual languages of all beings;
- 3) having inexhaustible poise in imparting spiritual teachings;
- 4) taking rebirth in the womb of an exemplary mother;

- 5) having an excellent spiritual heritage;
 - 6) having an excellent family lineage on one's father's side;
 - 7) having an excellent family lineage on one's mother's side;
 - 8) having an excellent retinue;
 - 9) taking an excellent rebirth;
 - 10) exhibiting the will to be free of saṃsāra;
 - 11) attaining buddhahood under a bodhi tree; and
 - 12) perfecting all qualities of enlightenment.
- See Rigdzin, *Tibetan-English Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology*, 435.
274. Maitreya, *Ornament of Manifest Realization*, chap. 1, v. 49a–c (Toh. 3786), Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, p. 6, l. 7.
 275. *Major Commentary on the Transcendent Perfection of Sublime Intelligence in Eight Thousand Verses*, (Toh. 3791), Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Cha, p. 117, lines 6–7.
 276. That is, while all ten levels involve all ten transcendent perfections, each level entails emphasis on a perfection that is specific to that level. Maitreya, *Distinguishing Center and Limit*, chap. 5, vv. 5 and 30cd, (Toh. 4021), Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, p. 87, lines 1–2 and p. 89, l. 2.
 277. That is, identity as it applies to an individual personality and identity as it applies to any phenomenon.
 278. It is from the realm of the Tuṣita gods that a sublime nirmāṇakāya descends to take rebirth in the human world, as one of the twelve deeds.
 279. The meaning here is not that of the Dzogchen sense of the term “spontaneous presence” but rather that of the Madhyamaka use of the term, that one's progress along the path of meditation from the eighth level onward is effortless.
 280. That is, the potential, or force, that derives from one's positive actions. This term can also refer to the incorruptible nature that underlies all such relative virtue.
 281. That is, the first bhūmi.
 282. *Ten Spiritual Levels*, (Toh. 44), Dg. K., Phal chen, vol. Kha, p. 371, lines 5–6.
 283. In the source, the last line reads: “but they are not subject to these, nor will they be in the future.” Maitreya, *Highest Continuum*, chap. 1, v. 63, (Toh. 4024), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 114, lines 3–4.
 284. That is, birth, aging, illness, and death.
 285. *Ibid.*, v. 64, (Toh. 4024), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 114, l. 4. In the source, the last two lines read:

nevertheless, these embodiments of compassion
demonstrate birth, death, illness, and aging.
 286. One of the eight avenues of ordinary consciousness, the afflictive aspect of consciousness functions in the minds of those who have not yet attained the path of spiritually advanced beings, that is, the path of seeing. It is a primary state of mind that focuses on consciousness as the basis of all ordinary experience and distorts this into a sense of self-identity, of “I.”
 287. The relevant passage is found in *Ten Spiritual Levels*, (Toh. 44), Dg. K., Phal chen, vol. Kha, pp. 369, l. 6 through p. 370, l. 2.
 288. *Complete Consolidation of Spiritual Teachings*, (Toh. 238), Dg. K., mDo sde, vol. Zha, p. 59, lines 1–3.
 289. The reference is to Puṇḍarīka, *Stainless Light*, Toh. (1347), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Da, p. 475, lines 4–5.

290. That is, before buddhahood is attained immediately following that final lifetime.
291. A reference to enlightened activity, which involves eliminating what is negative and encouraging what is positive. Maitreya, *Ornament of the Sūtras*, chap. 3, v. 7, (Toh. 4020), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 6, lines 1–2.
292. This is the second of the six states of gods in the realm of desire, traditionally said to be located on the summit of Sumeru, the axial mountain in the center of every thousandfold world system; the name derives from the thirty-three major gods of the Vedas who are held to be resident there.
293. The third of the six states of gods in the realm of desire; unlike gods in the first two states (of the Four Great Kings and the Thirty-three Gods), gods in this state are free of conflict with the demigods.
294. The fourth of the six states of gods in the realm of desire; in addition to their enormous wealth and enjoyment, gods in this state have the additional joy of exposure to the Mahāyāna teachings.
295. Gods in this state, the fifth of the six states of gods in the realm of desire, are able to emanate whatever they desire from their own bodies and then enjoy it.
296. In this state, the sixth of the six states of gods in the realm of desire, gods are able to enjoy what is emanated by the gods of the next lowest state, without having to make the effort to emanate it themselves.
297. The “immaculate abodes” are the five highest of the seventeen states of gods in the realm of form—the Gods Less Than Great, the Gods Not Subject to Affliction, the Gods with Great Insight, the Gods with Ideal Insight, and the Pinnacle State of the Realm of Form.
298. Compassion (defined as the intention that others be freed from suffering) is said to be “nonreferential” when it is based on the realization that both beings and phenomena lack any identity as such, so that the usual dualistic framework of subject, object, and their interrelationship is absent.
299. These were discussed previously on p. 120.
300. These were discussed previously on p. 116.
301. These are: being generous with spiritual teachings and material support, speaking in a pleasant manner, ensuring the accomplishment of the goals of those to be guided, and acting in accord with the conduct of those to be guided.
302. *Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana*, (Toh. 494), Dg. T., rGyud ’bum, vol. Tha, p. 318, lines 3–4. This tantra is the major source for the Caryātantra class.
303. That is, the thirty-seven factors previously discussed in the context of the cause-based dialectical approach.
304. The Mahāyāna tradition is further divided into two approaches—the dialectical approach (also termed the “Pāramitāyāna”) and the Vajrayāna approach.
305. The Tibetan term *rnal ’byor* (the equivalent of the Sanskrit “yoga”) implies “immersion in a genuine state of being.”
306. This term refers to the higher yogic practices employed in the stage of completion in Vajrayāna. These practices involve harnessing the subtle energies of the body, so that one experiences an intensifying warmth rising from the subnavel region up through the center of the body to the crown of the head, eliminating afflictive states and ordinary concepts in one’s mind in a powerful process comparable to that of an incinerating fire. Such methods are ways of rapidly arousing the experience of innate timeless awareness.
307. The literal idiom is “applies the seal of the unity of bliss and emptiness.” This

- begins as a conceptual process of bringing to mind an appreciation of this unity as the ultimate nature of things, and eventually becomes a direct experience of that unity.
308. These cycles of Vajrayāna practice are a major component of the “mother tantras” practiced primarily by the Sarma schools of the Tibetan tradition.
 309. This may indicate that the model presented here, from the tradition of pith instructions, is only a rough summation, not a detailed discussion. It may also be a reference to the foregoing comparison of the four applications of mindfulness in the sūtra tradition vis-à-vis the equivalent methods in the Vajrayāna, noting that the former cannot “rival” the latter in terms of their profundity.
 310. An actual consort is termed “karmamudrā”; when a consort is visualized (as, for example, by monastic practitioners), the term is “jñānamudrā.”
 311. That is, the focal centers in the crown of the head, throat, heart region, and navel region.
 312. That is, the four aspects of joy associated with the path and the four aspects associated with the fruition state.
 313. That is, for the time being, these eight aspects of bliss are still goals that one intends to achieve in the future, once one has progressed beyond the path of accumulation.
 314. The four applications are mindfulness of the body, sensations, mind, and phenomena.
 315. That is, either the identity of the individual personality—the “I”—or the identity of any given phenomenon existing “as such.”
 316. That is, the approach pertaining to the highest of the classes of tantra within the Vajrayāna; in this context, the reference is particularly to the Anuttarayoga class of tantra in the Sarma traditions of Tibetan Buddhism.
 317. These are the topics of the three remaining applications of mindfulness—sensations, mind, and phenomena.
 318. That is, that of the sūtra tradition.
 319. An alternate term for the third degree of joy, elsewhere called “joy beyond joy.” At this stage, one has gained true familiarity with the view cultivated in meditation, so that the intensifying experience of melting bliss has to a large extent arrested ordinary thought patterns, although the connection between ordinary states of mind and the mental events they produce has not been completely severed.
 320. These are patterns that cease as part of the usual process that occurs when one falls asleep or at death, although its significance is not appreciated unless one has trained in deeper states of meditative absorption. As the “masculine energy” in the crown of the head descends to the heart region, thirty-three thought patterns associated with aversion cease; as the “feminine energy” in the subnavel region ascends to the heart region, forty patterns associated with desire and attachment cease; and as the energy referred to earlier in the section as “Rāhu” causes the foregoing two energies to merge at the heart region, seven patterns associated with ignorance cease. This automatic process can be controlled voluntarily through the process of meditation Kongtrul is describing here.
 321. This term refers to a high degree of attunement, in which mind and body are adaptable to any morally positive or spiritual undertaking and tendencies that are counterproductive are overcome.
 322. In the context of the eightfold path, authentic view refers to that which derives from the nonconceptual perspective of timeless awareness.

323. This term refers to the fact that “emptiness” (perhaps the single most misunderstood term in the history of Buddhism) is not a blank state, or voidness, but a field of infinite potential, often described by such idioms as “the unity of manifestation (or sound, awareness, bliss, and so forth) and emptiness.”
324. Authentic meditative absorption, as a branch of the eightfold path, serves as an antidote to the obscurations that hinder development of the qualities of enlightenment, such as levels of deeper discernment.
325. That is, the subtle channels other than the central one, which permeate the entire body, and the transformation of which takes place in the wake of the path of seeing.
326. Authentic effort is that which serves as an antidote to eliminate the cognitive obscurations and other factors to be eliminated on the path of meditation, and which is able to be sustained over a long period of time without one becoming discouraged.
327. Authentic livelihood refers to eschewing hypocrisy or deception in one’s physical actions and speech.
328. Authentic ethical choices involve an understanding that true discipline lies in avoiding any and all actions that produce negative consequences for oneself and others.
329. That is, physical, verbal, and mental.
330. Authentic mindfulness is that which contributes in general to the development of calm abiding, stable mental focus, and impartiality; in this Vajrayāna context, it provides the focus required for one to maintain awareness during the dissolution process mentioned here.
331. This refers to the dissolution process that occurs involuntarily when one falls asleep and (in a more dramatic and final way) when one dies. It can also be initiated and controlled during meditation. The three steps are technically termed “manifestation,” “increase,” and “attainment” (the latter is sometimes termed “complete attainment”; in other explanations, “complete attainment” refers to a final phase beyond these three steps). The first of the three steps, that of manifestation, is described as a subtle state of consciousness that is the experience of a whitish field of light, compared to brilliant moonlight in a clear night sky. The second step, that of increase, is the experience of a reddish field, compared to a sunlit sky. The third step, that of attainment, is the experience of a dark field, compared to a murky dusk.
332. Authentic thought involves contemplation of topics discussed in the Buddhist teachings.
333. Authentic speech is that which is meaningful and insightful in helping others resolve doubts concerning spiritual matters.
334. Purang Lochung (Pu rangs lo chung, or Pu rangs pa ‘Gar lo tsā ba Chos kyi bzang po) (tenth century C.E.?) was a Tibetan translator who studied with the Indian master Devapurnamati. Purang Lochung was an important figure in the early transmission of the Cakrasaṃvara cycle from India to Tibet.
335. Malgyo Lotsawa Lodrö Drak (Mal gyo lo tsā ba bLo gros grags) (11th–12th centuries) was a Tibetan translator who worked with Indian masters and was an important figure in the transmission of the Cakrasaṃvara cycle from India to Tibet. He translated one version of the tantra with his teacher, the Indian scholar

- Sumatikirti, and taught masters of various schools of Tibetan Buddhism, including Nyima Bum (Nyi ma 'bum, 1158–1213) of the Dzogchen lineage of the Nyingma school and the early Sakya masters Khön Könchok Gyalpo ('Khon dKon mchog rgyal po, 1034–1102) and Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (Sa chen Kun dga' snying po, 1092–1158).
336. That is, although the *Well-Sealed Locket* (a tantra of the Cakrasaṃvara cycle) does not interpret the thirty-seven factors that contribute to enlightenment from this more profound Vajrayāna perspective, this does not mean that such an interpretation is spurious and unfounded.
 337. This is the highest of the four classes of tantra that are discussed in the Sarma schools of the Tibetan tradition—Kriyā, Caryā, Yoga, and Anuttarayoga. The Anuttarayoga tantras are considered the pinnacle of the Vajrayāna teachings because they embody the integration of the principles of skillful means and sublime intelligence. For Kongtrul's detailed treatment of these classes of tantra, see two other volumes in the *Treasury of Knowledge* series, *Treasury of Knowledge: Book Six, Part Four: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* and *Treasury of Knowledge: Book Eight, Part Three: The Elements of Tantric Practice*.
 338. For example, the methods for carrying out activities that pacify negative influences, enrich positive qualities, exert beneficial control, or directly remove obstacles.
 339. That is, the ramifications of the realization that comes about through the process known as “invoking timeless awareness,” which is superior in scope and profundity to that gained through methods from the sūtra tradition.
 340. Here the term is being used in the nontechnical sense of one's gaining a significant degree of proficiency in the practice of the two stages, rather than referring to the first anticipatory phase of the path of linkage.
 341. This state is considered a more “ordinary” attainment that results from the conduct one engages in as a Vajrayāna practitioner. Through the use of ritual objects and substances, one gains sufficient spiritual attainments to allow one to move unhindered in the realms of gods and humans, benefiting beings and “annihilating” negativity through the power of one's mantras.
 342. Another “ordinary” result of Vajrayāna conduct. Such a master's body has qualities of subtlety, lightness, and so forth (discussed below), so that while the actual body no longer manifests within the realm of desire, its emanations can ensure benefit for ordinary beings in that realm.
 343. Masters in the realm of desire have gained the more ordinary spiritual attainment of meditative warmth through Vajrayāna conduct, with the result that their bodies are equal to those of gods in the desire realm and they thus have some power over their longevity; they have various attainments due to the power of their mantras.
 344. That of buddhahood, or complete enlightenment.
 345. Because the lifespan has been extended beyond the normal length of human life.
 346. That is, the central subtle channel of the vajra body.
 347. That is, practice involving a physical consort.
 348. That is, isolation of the mind from negative thought patterns and afflictive states.
 349. This is a more obvious, or coarse, part of the process described in note 331. Before the three successive steps of subtle experience take place, there is a process whereby the energies underlying the elements constituting the physical body (earth, water, fire, air, space, and consciousness) dissolve into one another, from the more to the

less coarse. Once space has dissolved into consciousness, there ensue the three successive steps of subtle experience.

350. This topic is discussed in detail in the third part of Book 9.
351. The term “enlightened embodiment of timeless awareness” here refers to the attainment associated with the path of seeing in the Vajrayāna approach; in other contexts it can refer to a manifestation of a realized practitioner’s awareness that is perceptible to others in pure visionary experiences and can impart teachings and blessings. Kongtrul makes the point that moving too early into advanced levels of conduct can actually be a hindrance that delays one’s progress.
352. The three realms of desire, form, and formlessness that make up the cycle of conditioned existence, or *samsāra*.
353. A term for spiritually advanced beings, such as *dākas* and *dākinīs*, who can serve as one’s companions and consorts in Vajrayāna practice, providing guidance and blessings that accelerate one’s spiritual progress.
354. The *gaṇacakra*, which Kongtrul discusses at length in Book 9, Part 3 is a process whereby the Vajrayāna principle of transformation is implemented in a ritual setting. The emphasis is on appreciating sense pleasures without indulging in ordinary concepts or attachments.
355. This term refers to ways in which the nature of mind as timeless awareness expresses itself in specific modes of experience—visual, auditory, and so forth.
356. A direct cause is one that is responsible for the production of its specific result, without any other intervening factor being required (such as fire’s being the direct cause of its smoke).
357. These seven natural attributes of the *sambhogakāya*—the enjoyment of the richness of being, integration, supreme bliss, the absence of any independent nature, complete permeation by innate compassion, continuity, and the absence of cessation—are discussed in Book 10, Part 3.
358. The path of seeing constitutes the first *bodhisattva* level, the path of meditation the remaining nine levels.
359. That is, the dialectical approach, or *Pāramitāyāna*.
360. See note 392.
361. Also referred to as the “path of consummation.”
362. In the *sūtra* tradition, this would be a reference to the most subtle cognitive obscurations. The Sarma schools of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition use the term “destabilizing obscurations,” or “habitual patterns of change associated with the three successive steps of subtle experience” (“change” here simply refers to the fact that these obscurations come into effect and cease moment-by-moment). In some contexts, these are also referred to as “obscurations to meditative equipoise,” a level more subtle than that of the cognitive obscurations.
363. At this point Kongtrul begins discussing the practices known as the Six Branches of Union in the context of the model of the five paths. The Six Branches of Union are a series of advanced yogic practices presented in the teachings associated with the *Kālacakra* cycle. They constitute the “thematic” phase of the stage of completion (Tib. *mtshan bcas rdzogs rim*)—that is, specific practices that involve mental constructs, breathing exercises, and yogic postures—as distinct from the “nonthematic” aspect (Tib. *mtshan med rdzogs rim*) of formless meditation on the ultimate nature of mind. The six branches are technically termed “consolidation,” “medita-

tive stability," "breath control," "attention to the entire form of the deity," "recollection," and "meditative absorption." Kongtrul discusses these practices elsewhere in the Treasury of Knowledge; see, Kongtrul, *The Treasury of Knowledge: Book Eight, Part Four: Esoteric Instructions*, 289–330.

364. These ten indications are quasi-visual experiences (in that they are based on more subtle channels of energy than the optic nerve that is responsible for ordinary vision) one undergoes as one's realization of the utterly lucid nature of mind becomes more evident. See Dudjom Rinpoche, *Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 2, 167:

These are enumerated in Longcenpa, *Dispelling Darkness in the Ten Directions*, p. 344, as smoke (*du-ba*), mirage (*smig-rgyu*), clouds (*sprin*), fire-flies (*me-khyer*), sunlight (*nyi-ma*), moonlight (*zla-ba*), the blazing of gemstones (*rin-po-che 'bar-ba*), eclipse (*sgra-gcan*), starlight (*skar-ma*), and rays of light (*'od-zer*).

365. Here "meditative absorption" denotes the sixth of the Six Branches of Union according to the Kālacakra tradition.
366. That is, the elements—earth, water, fire, air, and space—that compose the external universe and their equivalents that compose one's physical body.
367. Caṇḍali is one of the fundamental practices of the thematic phase of the stage of completion. Through physical exercises, breathing techniques, and meditative methods, one harnesses the channels, energies, and bindu of the subtle body, producing an intensifying sense of warmth rising from the subnavel region to the crown of the head. The effect is one of "incinerating" afflictive states and ordinary concepts, thus accelerating the arousal of the experience of innate timeless awareness.
368. The bliss produced by this process is undiminishing because it is not subject to the causes and conditions that sustain ordinary pleasure, which then is undermined when situations change and those causes and conditions no longer pertain.
369. That is, the cakras of the navel region, heart region, throat, midbrow level, and the crown of the head.
370. The attainment of these twelve levels comes about through the gradual elimination of the twelve links of interdependent origination, discussed in the following paragraph.
371. These links—ignorance, formative patterning, ordinary consciousness, formation of the mind-body complex, sense fields, contact, sensation, compulsion, perpetuation, becoming, birth, and aging-and-death—provide a model of how the mind remains caught within the cycle of saṃsāra. These twelve can be further classified within four categories:
- (1) ignorance, formative patterning, and ordinary consciousness are the three branches that propel the mind into saṃsāra;
 - (2) formation of the mind-body complex, sense fields, contact, and sensation are the four branches that are the result of that process of propulsion (due to the deeply ingrained influence of ignorance, the karma reinforced through formative patterning, and the habitual patterns that imbue ordinary consciousness);
 - (3) compulsion, perpetuation, and becoming are the three branches that ensure the actual taking of rebirth; and

- (4) birth and aging-and-death are the two branches that constitute the actual taking of rebirth and its consequences.
372. "Becoming" is a term for the process whereby the mind takes rebirth within one of the three realms of *samsāra*, driven by the reinforced habitual patterns of karma and afflictive states.
373. "Form vajra" is a term for the refined experience of the body as the unity of manifest form and emptiness, imbued with the seven vajra attributes of invulnerability, indestructibility, authenticity, incorruptibility, stability, unobstructedness, and invincibility.
374. "Perpetuation" is the mental process of appropriation that serves as the substantial contributing cause that leads to becoming, that is, taking rebirth in *samsāra*.
375. "Compulsion" is the mental tension felt due to the constant effort of trying to avoid unpleasant and painful sensations and to seek pleasant ones.
376. "Sensation" in this context refers to mental states of satisfaction, dissatisfaction, or neutrality that arise once contact has been established between the sense consciousnesses and their objects.
377. "Speech vajra" is a term for the refined experience of speech as the unity of sound and emptiness, imbued with the seven vajra attributes.
378. "Contact" refers to the coming together of the triad of consciousness, a sense faculty, and the corresponding kind of object, so that the appropriate avenue of consciousness can apprehend its object.
379. The sense fields (Tib. *skye mched*) are avenues through which ordinary states of mind and mental events can come about (*skye*) and proliferate (*mched*), through which dualistic consciousness of subject-object can find expression. The traditional model lists twelve components—six avenues of sense consciousness (visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, and ideational) and their corresponding six kinds of sense objects (forms, sounds, odors, tastes, tactile sensations, and concepts).
380. The "formation of the mind-body complex" is the process whereby the four mental aggregates of forms—the "mental body" of the intermediate state between death and rebirth, comprising sensations, perceptions, formative factors, and ordinary states of consciousness—combine with the physical aggregate of the embryo in the womb, so that mind and body become mutually dependent on one another.
381. "Mind vajra" is a term for the refined experience of speech as the unity of awareness and emptiness, imbued with the seven vajra attributes.
382. "Ordinary consciousness" is a term for the dualistic mode of a subjective mind's perceiving its objects through the various avenues of the six senses (the five physical senses and the mental faculty of ideation).
383. "Formative patterning" refers to the process by which the ordinary mind formulates responses to what are perceived as objects separate from it, establishing the basis for the full expression of dualistic consciousness.
384. "Timeless awareness vajra" refers to the refined experience of the inseparability of body, speech, and mind as a unity with emptiness, imbued with the seven vajra attributes.
385. Practitioners are classified into several types, depending on the kind of progress they make spiritually. Most individuals are those who progress developmentally; among those, some may be practitioners who progress in leaps and bounds, "skipping" certain stages, or even regress at times, generally moving forward but occasionally "losing ground" in a nonlinear fashion. The most rare kind of individual

- is one who gains realization and enlightenment in an instantaneous leap of understanding; but even such practitioners are only so receptive in this lifetime because their minds have undergone extensive training in previous lifetimes. No one is truly an “instantaneous leap” kind of individual from the very start.
386. As was just noted, the path of seeing is the final step of the phase of meditative absorption.
387. The four vajras are the aforementioned form, speech, mind, and timeless awareness vajras. “Equal taste” refers to the experience of things from the perspective of their ultimate nature, rather than their individual traits.
388. The reference is to Puṇḍarīka, *Stainless Light*, (Toh. 1347), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Da, p. 455, lines 4–6. In the source, the final level is referred to as “and the level ‘The Prefecting of Timeless Awareness that Merges with Genuine Awareness, the Epitome of Self-Knowing Discernment.’”
389. That is, the branch of meditative absorption according to the Six Branches of Union in the Kālacakra tradition.
390. That is, each of the ten levels of a bodhisattva’s spiritual development involves two aspects, one of the experience undergone during formal meditative equipoise (the essence of which remains constant, while the degree of familiarity increases), and one of activity during postmeditation awareness (that is, the furthering of the transcendent perfections, with the emphasis shifting from one perfection to another depending on the level in question.)
391. *Adornment of the Vajra Heart Essence*, (Toh. 490), Dg. K., rGyud ’bum, vol. Tha, p. 115, l. 1. The second line in the source reads “is endowed with the resplendent radiance of the orb of the sun.”
392. Regarding these twelve levels, see Kongtrul, *Treasury of Knowledge: Book Eight, Part Four: Esoteric Instructions*, 444, note 85, citing Khenpo Tsültrim Gyamtso Rinpoché: “[these are] not the twelve *bhūmis* of an *ārya*. They are the concordant twelve *bhūmis* within the limb of *samādhi*, which culminate in the attainment of the first bodhisattva level.”
393. Based on the teachings of Yumo Mikyö Dorjé (eleventh century C.E.), Kunpang Tukjé Tsöndrū (1243–1313), and Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen (1292–1361), the Jonang tradition became known for its exegesis of the Kālacakra cycle and for its controversial view of “qualified emptiness” (*gzhan stong*). The “great and venerable master” is a reference to Jetsün Tāranātha (1575–1634), perhaps the most prolific and influential author of works that presented the Jonang teachings, helping to revivify that tradition.
394. These twelve aspects of timeless awareness correspond to the aforementioned twelve levels.
395. That is, the deity for whom one has received empowerment and on whom one meditates.
396. See Book 10, Part 1 for a discussion of the *kāyas* of buddhahood.
397. These are references to the process of elimination and refinement that is associated with traversing the twelve levels of the Vajrayāna tradition and the experiences of the sixteen gradations of joy.
398. Tāranātha was intimately connected with the *siddha* tradition of India, studied with several Indian masters, and authored works on the Indian origins of tantric teachings and biographies of Indian masters.
399. The third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorjé (Rang byung rdo rje, 1284–1339).

400. That is, a second Buddha Śākyamuni.
401. Vajrayāna teachings are often classified into two categories—the empowerments that mature one spiritually and the instructions that liberate one.
402. At this stage, one is not held to be actually experiencing suchness, the ultimate nature of reality, but still practicing on the basis of one's conviction of what this nature is; this is seen as a necessary step that leads eventually to the actual experience.
403. That is, the experience of one's body as a mere manifestation, without any independent nature of its own.
404. In the practice of the state of completion in the highest levels of tantra, one is able to harness the subtle energies of the body and direct them so that the bindu (the focalizing of energy in the cakras) descends in stages from the cakra in the crown of the head to that in the throat, to that in the heart region, to that in the navel region (depending on the level of practice, this may be continued down to the genitals). This process generates experiences of physical pleasure and mental well-being that are referred to as four gradations of joy—joy, sublime joy, joy beyond joy, and innate joy.
405. Once the foregoing process of arousing the four descending gradations of joy has been completed, the energy is directed to the glans penis and retained there (rather than being lost through ejaculation), whereupon it is drawn upward through the body in the reverse process, ascending through the four cakras and being stabilized finally in the crown of the head.
406. On a physiological level, this entails the retention of semen during male orgasm, rather than the usual loss through ejaculation that, from the point of view of the Vajrayāna teachings, undermines the experience of undiminishing bliss. The descriptions of such processes are invariably oriented to heterosexual males; the culture of Tibet in which these teachings flourished resulted in a definite bias in the writings. While the Vajrayāna teachings (and most, if not all, living Vajrayāna masters) affirm that parallel processes apply to women practitioners, these are far less extensively documented (references are passing and cursory at best) and are still an obscure and little-explored area.
407. Although the actual nature of utter lucidity that is experienced on the path of seeing remains the same throughout the path of meditation, the "training" involved lies in one's subjective experience of a more and more complete and authentic appreciation of the significance of this initial realization.
408. *Unsurpassable Definitive Expression*, (Toh. 369), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, p. 631, lines 1–2. In the source, the last line, "The Vajra Level (the thirteenth)," begins the citation, and where Kongtrul cites "The Incomparable One" (Tib. *dPe med pa*), the source reads "The Formless One" (Tib. *gZugs med pa*).
409. See note 388 and the passage cited from the *Presence of Timeless Awareness, the Sublimely Unchanging State*.
410. *Vajra Garland*, (Toh. 445), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, ff. 208a–277b. The *Vajra Garland* is the explanatory tantra of the father tantra class.
411. *Sphere of the Supreme Seal*, (Toh. 420), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, ff. 66a–90b. A tantra of the mother tantra class.
412. *Well-Sealed Locket*, (Toh. 381), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ga, p. 206, l. 7 through p. 206, l. 2.

413. This refers to one of the arcane languages in which the Indian tantric sources and commentaries are often couched. Such languages were often corrupt versions of Sanskrit, or regional dialects spoken by the Vajrayāna masters who codified these teachings.
414. That is, the prefix *upa-* in Sanskrit, or *nye ba* in Tibetan.
415. The Tibetan term (*zhing*) can denote realm, field, domain, and similar meanings.
416. The rules of *saṃdhi*, which govern the formation of words in Sanskrit, require that *chanda + uha* results in the form *chandoha*.
417. That is, the six (or nine) levels of meditative stability.
418. That is, the eight modes of complete liberation, which are discussed below.
419. The term “subtle trait” (Tib. *mtshan ma*; Skt. *nimitta*) refers to the way in which the mind defines phenomena on a more subtle level than that of “ordinary characteristics” (Tib. *mtshan nyid*; Skt. *lakṣaṇa*). Once one has attained the path of seeing, having eliminated the more obvious level of afflictive obscurations, one no longer thinks of phenomena in terms of their “characteristics” but still conceives of them having specific traits on some subtle level, until the cognitive obscurations have been completely eliminated.
420. That is, complete mastery of the ten kinds of control.
421. Abhayākara-gupta, *Froned of Pith Instructions*, (Toh. 1198), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Cha, p. 309, l. 6 through p. 310, l. 1.
422. Source not identified.
423. Tib. *’Thung spyod* or *’Thung gcod* (Sanskrit uncertain).
424. “Quench” is used here to translate either of the two alternate terms in Tibetan—*spyod* (engage) or *gcod* (cutting through).
425. Tib. *Nye ba’i ’thung spyod* or *Nye ba’i ’thung gcod* (Sanskrit uncertain).
426. That is, it constitutes the fruition state, which is discussed in Book 10.
427. *Unsurpassable Definitive Expression*, (Toh. 369), Dg. K., rGyud ’bum, vol. Ka, p. 631, l. 1.
428. The average number of breaths taken in a twenty-four-hour period, according to the medical texts of the Buddhist tradition.
429. These are discussed in Part 3 of Book 10.
430. Another term for the masculine essence.
431. The four degrees of emptiness (termed “empty,” “extremely empty,” “supremely empty,” and “totally empty”) are associated, respectively, with the successive states of subtle experience (“manifestation,” “increase,” “complete attainment,” and “utter lucidity”). Each of the four degrees is further divided into lesser, middling, and greater phases, giving the total of twelve.
432. This refers to one’s own subjective experience of acquiring an *uṣṇīṣa*, the protuberance on the crown of a buddha’s head that is one of the thirty-two major marks of perfect form and which embodies the qualities of the totally enlightened state.
433. That is, the twelve levels times 1,800 “moments” per level.
434. This is a term for the particular configurations of the subtle energies in the body, which change throughout the cycle of a lunar month.
435. That is, ten junctures, each involving 1,800 expressions of subtle energy.
436. Another term for the masculine essence.
437. Another term for the feminine essence.
438. That is, the glans penis.

439. This term is used in the tantras to distinguish the model of twelve levels (plus the thirteenth, that of complete enlightenment) from that found in the sūtras (of ten levels plus the eleventh level of buddhahood, Total Illumination).
440. The *Web of Magical Display* is, in fact, the name for what was originally a very large text that the Indian master Vimalamitra (c. eighth century) divided into a cycle of eight separate titles. The text referred to here is likely the extensive version of the tantra.
441. The aforementioned moon of bodhicitta, the center of masculine essence in the very crown of the head.
442. Source not identified.
443. "Enhancement" refers to an element of practice that employs specific methods that accelerate one's progress beyond what it would normally be by one's relying on the basic meditation techniques alone.
444. The term "spiritual deportment" (Tib. *brtul zhugs*; Skt. *vrata*) refers to means by which one engages in certain modes of behavior as expressions of, or ways of enhancing, one's inner realization, rather than merely adopting certain rules to govern one's actions. The Sanskrit word *vrata* derives from the root *vr* (to choose); the equivalent Tibetan term is glossed as meaning that one "brings an end" (*brtul*) to ordinary and inferior conduct and "engages" (*zhugs*) in a more spiritually constructive form of behavior.
445. Āryadeva, *Lamp That Integrates Conduct*, (Toh. 1803), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Ngī, p. 188, lines 4–7.
446. That is, the Buddha Śākyamuni.
447. That is, the Mahāyāna approach.
448. That is, the Vajrayāna approach.
449. *Gathering of Secrets*, (Toh. 442), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, ff. 90a–148a. The *Gathering of Secrets* is the source tantra of the Guhyasamāja cycle and the father tantra class.
450. *Adornment of the Vajra Heart Essence*, (Toh. 451), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Cha, ff. 36a–58b.
451. *Equal Union with All Buddhas*, (Toh. 366), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, ff. 151b–193a.
452. That is, the cycles of Guhyasamāja, Buddhasamayoga, Cakrasaṃvara, and Hevajra.
453. *A Share of Mantra*, (Toh. 429), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, p. 508, l. 1 through p. 513, l. 1.
454. Padmavajra, *Accomplishment of Secrets*, (Toh. 2217), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Wī, p. 44, l. 3.
455. The Sanskrit term *avadhūti* (Tib. *kun 'dar ma*), which is a name for the central subtle channel, literally connotes "shaking off everything," here interpreted as meaning shaking off, or eliminating, all duality and (figuratively) holding to the middle course.
456. The conduct of the Vajrayāna is grounded in, and incorporates, that of the basic approach (which emphasizes the principle of harmlessness and the Mahāyāna approach (which emphasizes that of altruism).
457. In the Sarma, or historically more recent, schools of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the tantras of the highest class, Anuttarayoga, are further classified into father

- tantras, mother tantras, and nondual tantras. While the schools differ slightly in which tantras they assign to which category, as a general rule “father tantras” are those that emphasize the methods of the stage of development and the attainment of the state of illusory body.
458. That is, the goddess of vajra form embodies the experiences of all mundane forms that one sees; the goddess of vajra sound, those of all mundane sounds that one hears; the goddess of vajra fragrance, those of all mundane odors that one smells; the goddess of vajra taste, those of all mundane flavors that one tastes; and the goddess of vajra touch, those of all tactile sensations that one feels.
459. For example, the goddess of vajra form might bear a mirror or a lamp; the goddess of vajra sound, a musical instrument; the goddess of vajra fragrance, incense or a bouquet of flowers; the goddess of vajra taste, a dish of fine food; and the goddess of vajra touch, a scarf of fine silk.
460. Āryadeva, *Lamp That Integrates Conduct*, (Toh. 1803), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Ngi, p. 188, l. 4 through p. 187, l. 5.
461. The Tibetan term *phyag rgya* here does not seem to be used in the usual sense of “consort” but rather in the sense of practitioners “standing in” for deities as their symbolic presences.
462. Ibid., p. 191, line 5 through p. 192, line 1.
463. *Equal Union with All Buddhas*, (Toh. 366), Dg. K., rGyud ’bum, vol. Ka, p. 310, lines 5–6.
464. That is, the final three of the nine situations initially arrived at. The extremely unelaborate mode, being an entirely internal process of meditative absorption, does not apply to a group situation.
465. Guru Lhochokpa (Gu ru Lho phyogs pa, “the guru from the south,” that is, India?) was one of Tāranātha’s masters, to whom the latter dedicated several of his Vajrayāna works.
466. *Well-Sealed Locket*, (Toh. 381), Dg. K., rGyud ’bum, vol. Ga, ff. 73b–158b.
467. *Vajra of Delight*, (Toh. 417), Dg. K., rGyud ’bum, vol. Nga, p. 13, l. 2.
468. *Source Tantra of the Circle of Bliss*, (Toh. 368), Dg. K., rGyud ’bum, vol. Ka, p. 466, l. 3. The lines in the source read:

One should gain realization through striving
for as long as necessary at activities associated with meditative
warmth, . . .

469. As aspects of conduct in the Vajrayāna, there are various ways of gazing that can be cultivated as means of benefiting others; such gazing techniques are outward expressions of inner realization, rather than mere physical gimmicks.
470. These are discussed in Book 10.
471. That is, the experience of primordial unity for one who has attained the fifth path, that of no more learning, as distinct from the anticipatory experience undergone by one who is still training on the path of meditation.
472. The Vajrayāna approach is often discussed as twofold—the path of freedom (which emphasizes the nonthematic phase of the stage of completion, and hence involves teachings and meditation that focus on the very nature of mind) and the path of skillful means (which emphasizes the thematic phase of the stage of completion). The practices of the path of skillful means involve those termed “one’s own

body endowed with skillful method” and “another’s body as the source of sublime intelligence.”

473. *Vajra Ḍāka*, (Toh. 370), Dg. K., rGyud ’bum, vol. Kha, ff. 1b–125a. The *Vajra Ḍāka* is the explanatory tantra of the Cakrasaṃvara cycle. Discussions of typology (particularly relating to women as potential consorts) are found in both Buddhist and Hindu tantric texts, discussions that parallel those found in the Indian secular tradition of erotic literature, such as the *Kāmasūtra*.
474. The lines cited by Kongtrul are not found in the *Well-Sealed Locket*.
475. The four māras are personifications of forces that bind the mind to saṃsāra and thus are “deadening influences” (*māra* from the root *mṛ*, “to kill”), creating obstacles to one’s pursuit of positive ethical conduct and spiritual progress. They are:
 - (1) the māra of afflictive mental states;
 - (2) the māra of the mind-body aggregates, which are products of fundamental ignorance, karma, and afflictive states, and render one subject to illness, aging, and death that are beyond one’s ability to control;
 - (3) the māra of the Lord of Death, in that one’s ordinary state of existence entails mortality, thus imposing a finite limit on one’s lifespan; and
 - (4) the māra of the “gods’ child,” which impedes the ability of one’s mind to function in higher states of meditation (the term refers to the traditional belief that the children of gods in the realm of desire are jealous of humans’ attempts to progress spiritually and transcend saṃsāra, and so create obstacles to that progress).
476. The term “roaming through various realms” is a key idiom in the descriptions of conduct and spiritual deportment found in the mother tantras.
477. The terms “tantras of sublime intelligence,” “mother tantras,” and “tantras of the yoginīs” are synonymous.
478. This expression is a euphemism for one’s spiritual consorts.
479. Literally, “from those of the *brāhmaṇa* class to those of the *caṇḍālā* class.” The descriptions of consorts were based on the ancient Indian social order that was the original milieu for these teachings and were translated literally as such into Tibetan. According to Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, 383, *caṇḍālā* (fem. *caṇḍālā*) is defined as “an outcast, [a] man of the lowest and most despised of the mixed tribes.”
480. Much of the literature concerning spiritual consorts is devoted to descriptions of what characterizes the “ideal” consort; as Kongtrul points out, while this is considered relevant for practitioners of the stage of development, such issues are of no concern for the true practitioners of the stage of completion.
481. These teachings are transmitted by the Kagyü schools of Tibetan Buddhism, the Drukpa Kagyü in particular. Based on teachings from Indian masters such as Tilopa (988–1069 C.E.) and Maitripa (tenth century C.E.), as well as those of the Tibetan master Milarepa (1052–1135 C.E.), they were collected as the *Oral Lineage of Cakrasaṃvara* (*Demchok Nyengyü*), primarily by Milarepa’s student Rechung Dorjé Drakpa (1085–1161 C.E.) and his followers, and were codified in their present form through the writings of such masters as the fourth Drukchen hierarch, Pema Karpo (1527–1592 C.E.).
482. This term can refer to women who are literally born in any of the gathering places sacred to tantric practitioners, or to woman practitioners who are engaged in the stage of completion.
483. That is, women who are engaged in practice of the stage of development.

484. That is, both consorts born in pure realms and those born of mantra.
485. The traditional literature describes certain nonhuman kinds of beings serving as consorts for Vajrayāna practitioners. *Yakṣī* is the feminine form of *yakṣa*; yakṣas and yakṣīs are a kind of nature spirit. As Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, notes, 838, “though generally regarded as beings of a benevolent and inoffensive disposition, . . . they are occasionally classed with Piśacas and other malignant spirits, and sometimes said to cause demoniacal possession.”
486. *Vajra of Delight*, (Toh. 417), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, p. 14, l. 1.
487. These are stages in the process of visualization in which a psychological barrier to the encroachment of negative forces is established and one's form as the deity is marked at various points with syllables or small forms of deities to enhance the sense of protection.
488. According to Dudjom Rinpoche, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 2, 119, in the Mahāyoga approach this threefold purity consists of “the purity of the outer world (*snod dag-pa*), the purity of its inner contents, that is living creatures (*bcud dag-pa*) and the purity of the components, bases and activity fields forming the mind-stream (*rgyud rnams dag-pa*).”
489. *Two Sections*, (Toh. 417 and 481), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, p. 12, lines 6–7, p. 13, l. 6, and p. 36, l. 5.
490. The five symbolic ornaments of bone are the earrings; wheel; armlets, bracelets and anklets (counted as one); sash; and necklace. The sixth ornament is the bone ash smeared on the body.
491. Such insignia are symbolic of deeper philosophical truths. For example, the skull-cup (which is indicative of death and mortality) expresses the impermanence, and ultimately the emptiness, of all things.
492. The symbolism and methodology of the Vajrayāna approach is rooted in a process of transcending the dualistic constructs of the mind's ordinary way of functioning. This requires that one's ingrained presuppositions about the world be called into question, often by rather confrontational means. Developed in the ancient Indian cultural context, with its emphasis on ritual purity in spiritual matters, the Vajrayāna teachings drew on much that culture held to be unclean or taboo; hence the reference to one's ingesting (if only metaphorically) or otherwise using such substances as meat or bodily fluids and waste products. The five kinds of meat are those of elephant, human, horse, dog, and cow (even the eating of beef—to say nothing of the other four!—was proscribed by the Brahmanical culture of ancient India). The five kinds of “nectar” are feces, urine, menstrual blood, semen, and human marrow.
493. *Vajra of Delight*, (Toh. 417), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, p. 14, lines 2–3.
494. This is Book 5, Part 4 of the *Treasury of Knowledge*; see Kongtrul, *Treasury of Knowledge: Book Five: Buddhist Ethics*, 215–306.
495. That is, the public display of such texts. In the source, the preceding line, “Always eliminate naïve affirmation and nihilistic denial,” reads, “Always avoid examining students and explaining teachings,” which given the source, cannot be taken literally.
496. The first four lines are found in the *Origin of Sublime Bliss*, (Toh. 373), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Kha, p. 294, lines 5–6. I have not been able to locate the remaining lines in the citation.
497. The most powerful of the Vedic gods.

498. *Well-Sealed Locket*, (Toh. 381), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ga, p. 217, lines 4–5, and *Two Sections*, (Toh. 417 and 418), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, p. 14, lines 4–5.
499. *Origin of Sublime Bliss*, (Toh. 373), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Kha, p. 580, l. 6.
500. This visualization exercise parallels the fire ritual in which ladles (embodied in the hands) are used to pour offering substances (embodied in the food and drink) into the fire pit (that is, the mouth), where they are incinerated (as the fire of caṇḍālī in the subnavel region transforms the food and drink into nectar that is offered to the deities of the body maṇḍala).
501. Note that, in keeping with the Vajrayāna principle of transformation based on an appreciation of the innate purity of everything, the commitments may run counter to what is commonly thought of as “spiritual” behavior.
502. *Padmavajra, Accomplishment of Secrets*, (Toh. 2217), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Wi, p. 51, lines 4–5.
503. The implication is one of realizing the unity of what is manifest and its ultimate nature. Such a unity is not a simple negation—“emptiness” in the sense of an unqualified negation—but an appreciation of the rich dynamic that embraces the relative and ultimate levels of truth simultaneously, without these contradicting or mutually excluding one another.
504. “Fourth” in the sense that it is the concern of the fourth stage of empowerment in the highest level of tantric practice.
505. That is, the three modes of conduct referred to below.
506. *Nāgārjuna, Five Stages*, (Toh. 1802), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Ngi, p. 101, lines 5–6. The source reads:
- Knowing how to distinguish what perceived phenomena are by nature,
one relies on the fourth aspect—suchness.
Whoever does not train in the three aspects will not swiftly attain the
fruition.
- Although sticks of wood hold the potential for fire,
it will not occur unless they are rubbed together;
similarly, without the training leading to enlightenment,
it will not occur in this lifetime.
507. That is, the elaborate, unelaborate, and extremely elaborate modes.
508. That is, the goal state of the śrāvaka approach.
509. *Source Tantra of the Circle of Bliss*, (Toh. 368), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, p. 463, l. 3.
510. *Two Sections*, (Toh. 417 and 418), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, p. 28, l. 7.
511. This term may refer to women who have gained attainment through their spiritual practice, or to feminine manifestations of the sambhogakāya. The masculine form is *dāka*.
512. As noted before, the Vajrayāna teachings aim to take one beyond the confines of ordinary conceptual biases based on dualistic consciousness. This often results in such seemingly shocking statements, although these are not intended to be taken literally as guidelines of conduct for those whose minds are still within this dualistic mode.
513. These are standardized rituals of song and dance, as distinct from the spontaneous singing and dancing mentioned earlier as being part of this level of conduct.

514. Those born of mantra, those born in pure realms, and those who are innately present. They are discussed below.
515. During Vajrayāna empowerment rituals, each student casts a flower on a depiction of the maṇḍala. The location on which it falls is taken as an indication of the particular family of deities in the maṇḍala with which one has the strongest karmic connection and the specific deity on which one should meditate.
516. Source not identified.
517. This is a reference to the aforementioned typology of consorts found in Vajrayāna literature.
518. These are a traditional set of five ornaments made of bone—tiara, necklace, earrings, bracelets and ankles (counted as one), and bands crossed over the torso.
519. Traditionally goddesses are visualized bearing eight different offerings—drinking water, washing water, flowers, incense, lamps, perfumes, food, and musical instruments.
520. A term employed in the Sarma schools of the Tibetan Vajrayāna Buddhist tradition. The term *mudrā* (literally, “stamp, seal”) signifies the most sublime spiritual attainment, in which one does not waver from the ultimate fruition state of unchanging bliss imbued with emptiness that entails all possibilities—the fundamental nature of everything that abides just as it is, timelessly, without any fluctuation. The term *mahā* (supreme) signifies that this fruition state embodies the most supreme state of elimination of the negative, of realization, and of omniscient awareness.
521. That is, of oneself and one’s consort as the masculine and feminine deities in union, the sexual organs as vajra and lotus, and all sexual activity as spiritual practice.
522. These are three moods related to body (allure, courage, and repulsion), three to speech (ferocity, mirth, and terror), and three to mind (compassion, awe, and tranquillity).
523. That is, of augmenting what is positive in one’s makeup and bringing an end to what is negative. The foregoing practices are designed to increase merit in those who lack it, so that they may participate in the gatherings of the heralds.
524. These are methods whereby various plants, minerals, and other substances are processed to promote longevity and physical stamina.
525. That is, the practice of karmamudrā, involving sexual union with a physical consort.
526. The actual source is Dombi Heruka, *Advice to Yogis and Yoginis on Extraordinary Topics*, (Toh. 1230), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Nya, p. 82, lines 5–7.
527. Abhayākara Gupta, *Froned of Pith Instructions*, (Toh. 1198), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Cha, p. 606, lines 4–5. The blockprint of the *Treasury of Knowledge* reads “heroines’ banquet,” but the text here has been changed to match the source, which reads “heroes’ banquet.”
528. A consort visualized as an expression of the profound lucidity of nondual timeless awareness.
529. Padmākara, *Five Samaya Commitments*, (Toh. 1224), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Nya, p. 53, l. 6.
530. Ibid., p. 54, lines 5–6. The lines in the source text are somewhat different:

Eliminate concern for any of these that one cannot find,
or anyone for whom they may not be suitable,

for the five kinds of meat, the five kinds of nectar, and so forth can be conceptualized intently through meditative stability.

531. Tib. *dge slong rdo rje 'dzin pa* (also termed *sum ldan rdo rje 'dzin pa*). A model emphasized by the Indian master Atiśa when he came to Tibet in the eleventh century C.E. In Atiśa's presentation, the ideal for Vajrayāna practice is one who upholds full monastic ordination on the Hīnayāna level, the bodhisattva vow on the Mahāyāna level, and the samaya commitments of a tantric practitioner on the Vajrayāna level.
532. There are four ways in which one can be considered an "elder"; other than the obvious factor of age, the other factors are one's level of ordination, degree of training and erudition, and realization (with its attendant experience of timeless awareness).
533. Strictly speaking, monastics should not attend gaṇacakra rituals that are made up entirely of lay practitioners; they should be sent away to another location and their share of the feast delivered to them afterward.
534. *First Section* (that is, *Vajra of Delight*), (Toh. 417), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, p. 16, l. 2.
535. *Well-Sealed Locket*, (Toh. 381), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ga, p. 303, lines 5–6.
536. Again, the actual source is Ḍombi Heruka, *Advice to Yogis and Yoginis on Extraordinary Topics*, (Toh. 1230), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Nya, p. 82, l. 7 through p. 83, l. 2.
537. That is, one given in detail, with full explanation and imparting some degree of experiential insight, as distinct from a more formal and cursory version, such as is often performed in public as a blessing.
538. See Book 10, Part 2 for discussion of the fruition state of Khecara.
539. That is, the unelaborate and extremely unelaborate modes.
540. *Gathering of Secrets*, (Toh. 442), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, p. 275, l. 1.
541. The text reads *subha*, but the more likely etymology is from the Sanskrit *supta(m)* (sleep).
542. The related Sanskrit verb roots are *bhuj* ('to eat'), *svap* ('to sleep'), and (possibly) *kuth* ('to stink, reek').
543. In this context, "expedient cause" is a euphemism for conduct involving a physical consort (that is, karmamudrā).
544. In Part 2 above, "The Levels and Paths in the Vajrayāna," the consummate stage of the isolation of mind is equated with the greatest degree of meditative warmth on the path of linkage. It is at this point that authentic practice with a physical consort, or karmamudrā, becomes a possibility.
545. During the third empowerment, known as the empowerment into sublime intelligence and timeless awareness, the common practice is for the master to display a small card depicting the form of a consort, while the student is led through a guided meditation simulating consort practice. In the true spirit of such empowerments, however, the student would in ideal cases engage in sexual union with an actual consort in order to be exposed to this level of practice.
546. This recalls the situation in which the words spoken by someone who was blessed by Śākyamuni (for example, the Heart Sūtra, spoken by Avalokiteśvara without the Buddha actually speaking any of the teaching) constitute the "word of the Buddha."
547. In the most elaborate forms of empowerment found in the Anuttarayoga class of

- the Sarma schools, there are four levels of empowerment. The empowerments of the water and the crown belong to the first stage, the vase empowerment. The secret empowerment is the second of the four; the third is called the “empowerment into sublime intelligence and timeless awareness”; the fourth is simply called the “fourth empowerment” (occasionally the “precious word empowerment” since its transmission is based on a few words of profound instructions uttered by the master).
548. *Gathering of Secrets*, (Toh. 442), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, p. 250, l. 5.
549. Of all the sections contained in the most extensive version of the Kālacakra tantra, in twelve thousand verses, only that concerning empowerment (*A Concise Presentation of Empowerment*) was translated into Tibetan. The more concise version of the tantra is the *Wheel of Time*. The most concise version is the *Heart Essence of the Glorious Wheel of Time*.
550. That is, *Wheel of Time*, (Toh. 362), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, p. 190, lines 5–6.
551. That is, the Buddha Śākyamuni. “Victorious One” is an epithet for a buddha.
552. *Ibid.*, p. 134, lines 2–4.
553. This terminology is often used, especially in the Kālacakra cycle, to emphasize the dynamic quality of emptiness, as opposed to the blank void state that the word might otherwise suggest.
554. This is a reference to the practices of jñānamudrā (with an imagined consort) and karmamudrā (with a physical partner), and part of the implication of “not shifting” is developing the ability to retain the energy of the bindu that is usually expended in orgasm. See also note 856.
555. That is, the seventh through tenth transcendent perfections—skillful means, aspiration, spiritual power, and timeless awareness.
556. *Ibid.*, p. 180, lines 6–7.
557. The terms in the following paragraph derive from the Six Branches of Union in the Kālacakra cycle.
558. These attainments are discussed in detail in Part 2 of Book 10.
559. Not identified.
560. That is, actions that result in harm and suffering for oneself and others.
561. The Nyingma model of Mahā, Anu, and Ati is functionally equivalent to the classification in the Sarma schools into father tantra, mother tantra, and nondual tantra and bears many resemblances to it. In the Mahāyoga model, the view emphasizes the “supreme unity of innate purity and equalness,” the emphasis in meditation is on the stage of development, and the path leads to the results of the four levels of a master of awareness. In the Anuyoga model, the view employs the imagery of the “child” of bodhicitta born of the unity of basic space and timeless awareness, while the emphasis in meditation is less on the stage of development and more on the thematic phase of the stage of completion (the yogas focusing on subtle channels, energies, and bindu). In the Ati (or Dzogchen) model, the view is that of the world of all appearances and possibilities—of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa—constituting the display of naturally occurring timeless awareness, and meditation consists of two approaches, those of *trekchö* and *tögal*. In the Nyingma model of nine spiritual approaches, or yānas, it is only the ninth, or pinnacle, approach of Atiyoga that is based on timeless awareness (Tib. *ye shes lam du byed pa*); all the eight “lower” approaches are based to some extent on an aspect of ordinary mind (Tib. *sems lam du byed pa*).

562. These are the two secondary subtle channels that run parallel to the central channel, down the right and left sides of the body. Generally speaking, the rasanā is visualized as red in color and is on the right side for women, the left for men; the lalanā is white and on the left for women, the right for men. The exact configuration, however, depends largely on the particular system of practice being followed.
563. That is, the sixth principle that embraces and unites those of the five buddha families.
564. Source not identified.
565. That is, Longchen Rabjam (kLong chen rab 'byams, 1308–1364).
566. Principally in his *Seven Treasuries* (*mDzod bdun*), especially the *Precious Treasury of Words and Their Meanings* (*Tshig don rin po che'i mdzod*) and the *Precious Treasury of the Sublime Spiritual Approach* (*Theg mchog rin po che'i mdzod*).
567. There are several different enumerations of these eighteen texts. According to the writings of the fourth Zhechen Gyalsap, Pema Namgyal (Zhe chen rgyal tshab Padma rnam rgyal, 1871–1926), they are:
- A) The five fundamental sources:
- 1) the tantra of enlightened form, *Union of All Buddhas in Equalness* (*dPal sangs rgyas thams cad dang mnyam par sbyor ba zhes bya ba'i rgyud kyi rgyal po*);
 - 2) the tantra of enlightened speech, *Sphere of the Secret Moon* (*Zla gsang thig le*);
 - 3) the tantra of enlightened mind, *Gathering of Secrets* (*dPal gsang ba 'dus pa rgyud kyi rgyal po*);
 - 4) the tantra of the qualities of enlightenment, *Foremost Glorious and Sublime One* (*dPal mchog dang po*); and
 - 5) the tantra of enlightened activity, *Garland of Activity* (*rGyud kyi rgyal po chen po las kyi 'phreng ba*).
- B) The five tantras utilized in sādhana practice:
- 6) *Display of the Heruka* (*Kro dha khrag 'thung rol pa'i rgyud chen po*);
 - 7) *Display of Hayagrīva* (*De bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi dgongs pa bla na med pa'i gsang ba dpal rta mchog rol pa'i rgyud chen po*);
 - 8) *Display of Compassion* (*dPal snying rje rol pa'i rgyud 'jig rten las 'das pa gsang ba'i mdo*);
 - 9) *Display of Nectar* (*rGyud kyi rgyal po chen po dpal bdud rtsi rol pa*); and
 - 10) *Twelvefold Kīlaya Dagger* (*Phur pa ki la ya bcu gnyis kyi rgyud ces bya ba'i mdo*).
- C) The five tantras associated with conduct:
- 11) *Amassing of Mountains* (*Sangs rgyas kun gyi dgongs pa'i bcud bsdu ri bo brtsegs pa'i rgyud*);
 - 12) *Fierce Lightning of Timeless Awareness* (*Ye shes rngam glog*);
 - 13) *Array of Saṃaya* (*Dam tshig bkod pa*);
 - 14) *One-Pointed Meditative Absorption of Avalokiteśvara* (*'Phags pa spyan ras gzigs ting nge 'dzin rtse gcig gi rgyud*); and
 - 15) *Berserk Elephant* (*gLang po che rab 'bog gi rgyud*).
- D) Two appended tantras:
- 16) *Magical Web of Vajrasattva* (*rDo rje sems dpa'i sgyu 'phrul drva ba gsang ba thams cad kyi me long zhes bya ba'i rgyud*); and
 - 17) *Lasso of Skillful Means* (*'Phags pa thabs kyi zhags pa padma 'phreng gi don bsdu pa*).

E) The single source tantra that epitomizes them all:

18) *Heart Essence of Secrets* (*gSang ba'i snying po de kho na nyid nges pa*).

568. The source reads “four aspects of bodhicitta . . .”

569. Anonymous, *Three Stages*, lines 79–80; P 4742, bsTan 'gyur dpe bsdur ma, vol. 43, p. 1175. The *Three Stages* is a short work in verse that is subtitled *Pith Instructions concerning the Web of Magical Display*. It is based on the tantra the *Heart Essence of Secrets* from the Mahāyoga class of Nyingma tantras. Although not found in the sDe dge edition of the bsTan 'gyur, it is contained in the Narthang (sNar thang) and Beijing (“Peking”) editions. The authorship is not attested to in the text.

570. This is a reference to the principle of inseparability underlying the view of the Mahāyoga approach—that is, the inseparability of manifestation and emptiness as the supreme unity of innate purity and equality.

571. That is, the two extremes of conditioned existence (as a state of confusion) and mere personal salvation (as the end of personal suffering that ignores the welfare of others).

572. This is the first of three stages of meditative absorption that constitute the framework of the practice of deity yoga in the Mahāyoga approach. The three stages are:

- 1) the “meditative absorption of suchness,” which is an awareness of the ultimate nature of everything, embodied in a sense of everything dissolving into emptiness;
- 2) the “meditative absorption of universal manifestation,” which is an awareness of the innate quality of compassion that imbues emptiness, embodied in a sense of the stirring of thought in the mind as an expression of that compassion; and
- 3) the “causal meditative absorption,” which is an awareness of the unity of the two foregoing stages, embodied in the visualization of a seed syllable from which the complete form of the deity emerges.

573. That is, still entailing afflictive states or the potential for their occurrence, due to the fact that the path of seeing has not yet been attained.

574. That is, the meditative absorption of suchness itself, the illusoriness of things, the single form of the deity, and the elaborate version of the maṇḍala.

575. That is, the excellence of the environment (visualized as a pure realm), of the teacher (visualized as an embodiment of enlightenment), of the retinue (oneself and others visualized as deities), of the teachings (being solely those of the Vajrayāna approach), and of the time frame (that of the ever-present moment of timeless awareness). These are parallel to the “fivefold certainty” of the sambhogakāya. One establishes this framework for receiving teachings and practicing in the Vajrayāna context.

576. The four branches are termed “approach,” “intimate approach,” “accomplishment,” and “supreme accomplishment.” They constitute the standard model for the practice of deity yoga as the main focus in the Mahāyoga context.

577. These are discussed below.

578. Literally, “the four continents.”

579. In the context of the path of seeing, these masters are practitioners who gained stability in the practice of the stage of development, so that their minds have matured into the experience of the deity even though they have not yet become capable of refining away the residue of the elements making up the physical body.

580. Still with respect to the path of seeing, these masters are practitioners for whom, at the time of attaining the highest mundane experience, their physical bodies are

transformed into forms of subtle essence (“vajralike bodies”), while their minds mature into the state of timeless awareness on the path of seeing, so that they attain a state beyond birth and death.

581. Buddhaguhya, *Short Exposition of the Path*, NKG, v. 23, p. 146, l. 1.
582. That is, immediately after death.
583. Buddhaguhya, *Graduated Path*, NKG, v. 23, p. 109, lines 3–4. In the source the third line reads “the form” rather than “the symbolic embodiment.”
584. That is, pacifying, which causes illnesses, negative influences, and other obstacles to subside; enriching, which fosters the growth of such positive factors as longevity, merit, prosperity, and intelligence; powerful, which exerts a beneficial influence over situations and other beings; and wrathful, which (as a direct and powerful expression of compassion) eliminates negativity and removes obstacles.
585. See note 59.
586. That is, in traditional Buddhist cosmology, a world system such as our own—consisting of a central mountain (the *axis mundi*) surrounded by an ocean and four continents in the cardinal directions—which constitutes the unit that makes up universes of increasing magnitude (one-thousandfold, two-thousandfold, three-thousandfold, and “countless” universes) in a way that is reminiscent of modern astronomy’s model of planetary systems, star systems, galaxies, and metagalaxies.
587. The text has “fearless” (*’jigs med*), but judging from the commentary following, this would seem to be in error for “indestructible” (*’jig med*).
588. These are the eight qualities of powerful mastery, which are considered more common, or mundane, siddhis. They are literally termed the qualities of “subtlety of form,” “obvious form,” “lightness,” “pervasiveness,” “true attainment,” “extreme clarity,” “reliability,” and “serving as a source of all that is wished for.” These qualities are discussed in more detail in Book 10, Part 2.
589. *Ibid.*, NKG, v. 23, p. 111, lines 3–4.
590. That is, in the formal practice of the Mahāyoga approach, the “four kinds of spiritual miracles” refers to a particular format for meditation. The “spiritual miracle of meditative absorption” is that of meditating on the maṇḍala of the buddhas of the five families and their retinues; the “spiritual miracle of consecration” is that of consecrating each of the deities according to the respective family type; the “spiritual miracle of empowerment” is that of imbuing the deity, through the respective process of empowerment, with the qualities pertaining to the specific family; and the “spiritual miracle of offering” is that of praising and making offerings to the deities.
591. *Heart Essence of Secrets*, chap. 12, v. 5a–c, (Toh. 832), Dg. K., rNying rgyud, vol. Kha, p. 245, l. 7.
592. In the context of the path of meditation, a master of mahāmudrā awareness is one who moves from the experience of utter lucidity on the path of meditation to an embodiment of timeless awareness that is a state of primordial unity in which training is still necessary.
593. A master of spontaneously present awareness is one who, as a result of attaining the path of no more training (or consummation), gains the level of Vajradhara—that is, the spontaneous presence of the five kāyas.
594. That is, the second of the three kāyas as they are usually enumerated.
595. Buddhaguhya, *Graduated Path*, NKG, v. 23, p. 117, l. 6 through p. 118, l. 1 and p. 118, l. 2. In the source, the third line reads as follows:

... whatever it is becoming fully evident as a form through meditation, ...

and the fifth line reads simply:

... the attributes of an embodiment of timeless awareness, ...

596. *Heart Essence of Secrets*, chap. 6, v. 7ab, (Toh. 832), Dg. K., rNying rgyud, vol. Kha, p. 245, lines 4–5. The sword is the symbol associated with the karma family. In the source text, the second line reads as follows:

... vajra, wheel, jewel, lotus, sword, and bell blaze.

The bell could be a symbol for the sixth family, the unifying principle within which the five families are subsumed.

597. The process of gaining mastery is implicitly connected to the image of a jewel and the wealth and power it confers.
598. The lotus is a metaphor for a state free of attachment, for it is rooted in mud but its blossom is free of any stain.
599. The Sanskrit term “karma” is the equivalent to both the Tibetan term *las* (ordinary action or activity) and its honorific form *phrin las* (enlightened activity).
600. Buddhaguhya, *Graduated Path*, NKG, v. 23, p. 118, l. 6 and p. 119, lines 1–2.
601. While this is an epithet for Vajrapāṇi, the name here does not refer to one of the eight great bodhisattvas of the Mahāyāna approach but to the embodiment of the five kāyas.
602. A “sublime” nirmāṇakāya is one that manifests in the perceptions of ordinary beings as performing the twelve deeds; Śākyamuni is one example, as indeed are all the 1002 buddhas destined to appear during this present age (Śākyamuni having been the fourth). These deeds are discussed in detail in Book 2, Part 3 of the *Treasury of Knowledge*. They are described in Maitreya, *Highest Continuum*, chap. 2, vv. 54–56, (Toh. 4024), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 236, lines 6–7:

[the nirmāṇakāya] actually takes rebirth—

[1] descending from Tuṣita, the joyous gods’ realm,

[2] entering a womb, [3] taking rebirth,

[4] becoming skilled in the arts and sciences,

[5] enjoying the company of a retinue of queens,

[6] gaining certainty of release from the world, [7] practicing austerities,

[8] going to the center of enlightenment,

[9] defeating the armies of Māra, [10] awakening to perfect enlightenment,

[11] turning the wheel of the Buddhadharma,

and [12] passing into nirvāṇa. Those who have gone in these ways

do so within the total range of impure realms

for as long as there is conditioned existence.

603. Buddhaguhya, *Graduated Path*, NKG, v. 23, p. 120, lines 1–2. In the source, the first line reads simply “pure awareness itself.”
604. Buddhaguhya, *Short Exposition of the Path*, NKG, v. 23, p. 152, l. 6 through p. 153, l. 1.
605. Anonymous, *Three Stages*, lines 95–96. P. 4742, bsTan ’gyur dpe bsdur ma, vol. 43. p. 1175.

606. From the verbal stem *car*, “to do, act, perform.”
607. That is, one who has not yet fully matured spiritually.
608. That is, the ordination of individual liberation of the Hinayāna approach, the bodhisattva vow of the Mahāyāna approach, and the tantric samaya of the Vajrayāna approach. The source referred to is probably the *Pinnacle of Definitive Expression* (see note 564).
609. That is, (1) copying sacred texts, (2) making offerings, (3) being generous and practicing charity, (4) listening to spiritual teachings, (5) memorizing them, (6) reading them, (7) explaining them to others, (8) reciting prayers and liturgies, (9) contemplating the meaning of the teachings, and (10) meditating on that meaning.
610. Faith in Buddhism is a complex phenomenon, never meant to be naïve, blind, or unquestioning. It incorporates a sense of awe or wonder as one appreciates the qualities of the object of one’s faith, a desire to emulate that object (that is, to become a buddha oneself), and a trust in the truth of the teachings one is following. To these three aspects a fourth is sometimes added, that of irreversible faith, that is, the fact that one’s faith is constant in the face of any and all circumstances (whether one is happy or unhappy, prosperous or destitute, and so forth).
611. Buddhaghūya, *Graduated Path*, NKG, v. 23, p. 90, l. 5.
612. Ibid., l. 6. In the source, the second line is not found as cited.
613. Source not identified.
614. These are commentaries written by the early masters of these traditions, which summarize the content of the much more extensive tantras and render it more accessible to practitioners. It is for this reason that the late Nyoshul Khen Rinpoché Jamyang Dorjé used to define the Tibetan term for these commentaries (*lung*) as cognate to the word “handle”; by a felicitous coincidence with modern English slang, these commentaries are thought of as “giving one a handle” on the more abstruse and cryptic texts of the tantras.
615. In the Anuyoga model, the five yogic phases correspond to the five paths of the dialectical approach: the “yoga of the mind’s directed intent” to the path of accumulation, the “yoga of affirming one’s spiritual birthright” to the path of linkage, the “yoga of supreme inspiration” to the path of seeing, the “yoga of attaining supreme transmission” to the path of meditation, and the “yoga of perfecting supreme dynamic energy” to the path of no more training.
616. The Anuyoga model involves ten levels that fall within the five paths (that is, the five yogic phases): (1) the “level of unpredictable change” and (2) the “level of the basis of reliance” pertain to the first yogic phase, that of the mind’s directed intent; (3) the “level of refining away major obscurations,” (4) the “level of continuity of training,” and (5) the “level of the meritorious basis” pertain to the second yogic phase, that of affirming one’s spiritual birthright; (6) the “level of the improvement of stability” pertains to the third yogic phase, that of supreme inspiration; (7) the “level of the framework that ushers in the fruition state,” pertains to the fourth yogic phase, that of the attainment of the supreme transmission; and (8) the “level of abiding without change,” (9) the “level of the permeation of the actual nature of phenomena,” and (10) the “level of the universal range of perfection” pertain to the fifth yogic phase, that of level of the universal range of perfection.
617. Termed thus because while one is on the path of accumulation there is the possibility of one’s practice being undermined or of one regressing and “losing ground.”

618. Termed thus because the insight one gains on the path of accumulation is stabilized to serve as a basis for the path of linkage.
619. In this, the first of the five yogic phases, which corresponds to the path of accumulation in other contexts, the focus in meditation practice is on directing one's mind, if only as a sense of dedicated intent, toward two factors—the utterly lucid quality of emptiness and the manifest quality of the deity's form.
620. Termed thus because, in the context of the path of linkage, the habitual patterns that constitute major obscurations to the actual experience of utter lucidity have all been refined away.
621. Termed thus because one trains continuously, day and night, in experiencing the unity of the empty and manifest aspects of utter lucidity.
622. Termed thus because one relies on the basis of the merit one accrues through “the conduct of the immediate cause” (that is, practice involving a consort) so as to immerse oneself in the incorruptible state of timeless awareness.
623. In the second of the five yogic phases, corresponding to the path of linkage, while one's practice can still be undermined there can no longer be any regression, and thus one's spiritual birthright—one's buddha nature—is affirmed.
624. In the third of the five yogic phases, the supreme inspiration one feels on the path of seeing is such that one is free of the five kinds of fear (see note 186) and has transcended all mundane experiences through one's direct perception of the actual nature of phenomena.
625. Termed thus because, on the path of meditation, one focuses on the state of primordial unity that still requires training and become more familiar with this state, so that one will be able to gain the fruition state of primordial unity that requires no more training.
626. In the fourth of the five yogic phases, corresponding to the path of meditation, one receives the supreme confirmation of one's final enlightenment, with a certainty concerning the time and place.
627. Termed thus because, within the context of the path of consummation, one abides in the enlightened intent of the inseparability of basic space and timeless awareness, without transition or change.
628. Termed thus because, again within the context of the path of consummation, the “seal” of the actual nature of phenomena—the unity of utter lucidity as that actual nature and of objects in the phenomenal world as the expressions of the deity—permeates all one's perceptions and conduct.
629. Termed thus because, still within the context of the path of consummation, the entire array of the rūpakāyas—the manifestations of the dynamic energy of pure awareness—is utterly perfect, fully embraced within unborn basic space.
630. In the fifth of the five yogic phases, corresponding to the path of consummation, all the qualities of enlightenment that pertained to the state of primordial unity still requiring training become perfect in all their dynamic energy.
631. See note 331.
632. In the tantras of the Nyingma school of the Tibetan tradition, a common model for the fruition state of buddhahood speaks of twenty-five factors, five each relating to form, speech, mind, qualities, and activity. These are discussed in Book 10, Part 4.
633. Source not identified.
634. That is, habitual patterns that account for such seemingly inappropriate suffering

- as a realized being's having a headache, or the case of Nāgārjuna only being able to be killed by having his head sawn off by a blade of grass (a karmic trace left from a former lifetime, in which he cut off the head of an insect with a blade of grass).
635. That is, the subliminal tendencies of afflictive states, which permeate the three realms of saṃsāra.
636. That is, the more "instinctive" tendencies to afflictive states, as distinct from those that involve conceptual thinking.
637. That is, various degrees of cognitive obscurations that are eliminated on the three "pure" levels—that is, the eighth, ninth, and tenth levels, respectively.
638. That is, the scriptural sources of the Anuyoga approach; the principal text, *All-Embracing Intent*, although technically classified as a tantra, contains the word "sūtra" in its title.
639. Tib. *man ngag*; Skt. *upadeśa*. These are concise ("pithy") summations of key points of spiritual practice to be implemented in a very direct way so as to arouse direct experience without a lot of preliminary study or training. They are characterized as being "of few words, yet complete as to the meaning."
640. *All-Creating Monarch*, chap. 65, 5b, NGB, vol. 1, p. 215, l. 7 through p. 216, l. 1. The line in the version available to me reads slightly differently: "The level of pure and spontaneously perfect awareness, unaltered and unrefined." The *All-Creating Monarch* is a primary scriptural source of the Dzogchen teachings in general and those of the Category of Mind (Tib. *sems sde*) in particular.
641. The four levels of empowerment unique to the Dzogchen approach are termed the "elaborate" (*spros bcas*), the "unelaborate" (*spros med*), the "extremely elaborate" (*shin tu spros med*), and the "utterly unelaborate" (*rab tu spros med*).
642. The Sanskrit term "yoga" (from the stem *yuj*, 'to join, link') is rendered in Tibetan as *rnal 'byor*, which could be translated (especially in the Dzogchen context) as "immersion in a genuine state of being."
643. The four visions of the Atiyoga, or Dzogchen, approach are termed:
 (1) the direct experience of the actual nature of phenomena;
 (2) the enrichment of meditative experience;
 (3) pure awareness reaching full expression; and
 (4) the resolution of phenomena in their true nature.
644. This direct experience of the actual nature of phenomena as a state of original purity transcends the limitations of conceptual labels and intellectual speculation, "opening the doorway" to the pure realm of experience that cannot be fathomed by the ordinary imagination.
645. A reference to a particular element of the visionary experience, in which chains of luminous points of light (compared to strings of pearls) are perceived on the background of a field of light.
646. In this vision, due to one's gazing at the vajra chain formation of pure awareness (the manifest expression of deeper insight), one perceives the points and spheres of light on the verge of maturing into forms of enlightenment; perceptions based on confusion subside, and those based on timeless awareness become more fully evident.
647. In this stage of visionary experience, the points and spheres of light mature into forms of enlightenment, and the full expression of pure awareness directs one beyond the visionary expressions of the three kāyas that arise on this spiritual path.

648. In this final stage of visionary experience, all one's perceptions are completely purified within the unique maṇḍala of the supreme sphere of being, so that all phenomena labeled by the conceptual mind resolve within the expanse of their actual nature. Even any sense of reifying that actual nature is absent, and so one reaches the consummate stage of resolution, beholding the "vision of dharmakāya."
649. The source text reads "the paths and levels."
650. The source text reads "attain."
651. The source text reads "all countless."
652. The source text reads "abide without wavering."
653. The source text reads "those enlightened qualities."
654. Interestingly, the source text reads "do master."
655. The source text simply reads "they dwell on the fourteenth level."
656. *Naturally Arising Awareness*, chap. 77, NGB, vol. 11, p. 630, l. 7 through p. 632, l. 6.
657. Ibid., p. 632, l. 6 through p. 633, l. 1.
658. Ibid., chap. 52, p. 516, lines 5–7: "the yoga of words on the level of characterizing things, the yoga of focusing on mere indications, the yoga of subsequent experience, the yoga of the ascertainment of the true nature of things, the yoga of apparent phenomena as mind, the yoga of involvement in activity, the yoga of potential actions as causes, the yoga of committed actions as conditions, the yoga of the consummate fruition state, the yoga of authentic meaning, the yoga of consummate freedom, and the yoga of the perfection of all that is to be done."
659. In the tantra the *Conjunction of Sun and Moon*, chap. 2, NGB, vol. 12, p. 527, l. 2 through p. 528, l. 6, some twenty-three kinds of conduct are enumerated:

Ah! Ah! Listen, great sage!

Listen well to what I present to you.

Whoever applies themselves to the meaning of immersing themselves in genuine being should familiarize themselves with the following kinds of conduct:

Through the conduct like that of a bee,

they should savor the taste of all spiritual teachings.

Through the conduct like that of a wild deer,

they reject sense objects that serve as conditions perpetuating confusion.

Through the conduct like that of a mute,

they should abandon speech that derives from confusion.

Through the conduct like that of a dove,

they cut through doubts about the secret mantra approach.

Through the conduct like that of a madman,

they avoid staying in a single place.

Through the conduct like that of a lion,

they roam through charnel grounds, rejecting any attitude of fear.

Through the conduct like that of a dog or pig,

they reject any attitude of what is clean or unclean.

Through the conduct like that of a bear cub,

they engage in conduct immediately upon recalling it.

Through the conduct like that of a small child,

they reject rigid attitudes due to confused fixations.
 Through the conduct like that of a female swan,
 they guide with words that are in harmony with the world.
 Through the conduct like that of an elephant,
 they rout the forces of saṃsāra.
 Through the conduct like that of a magpie,
 they reject concepts about who is child or enemy.
 Through the conduct like that of a fish,
 they set themselves limits, knowing contentment in their desires.
 Through the conduct like that of a female mule,
 they do not nurture the seeds of saṃsāra.
 Through the conduct like that of a brahmin,
 they avoid using the wealth and food of others.
 Through the conduct like that of a hero,
 they delineate the gap between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.
 Through the conduct like that of a source of water,
 they let the foundation of memory settle in its own true state.
 Through the conduct of “waving a spear in space,”
 they engage unobstructedly with all things.
 Through the conduct like that of the wind in the sky,
 they eliminate thoughts based on dualistic fixation.
 Through the conduct like that of a garuḍa,
 they cross over abysses in one fell swoop.
 Through the conduct like that of a mountain,
 they engage in a state of unchanging and natural purity.
 Through the conduct like that of a great chariot,
 they relate unmistakably to apparent phenomena.

660. That is, the constituents of the inanimate physical world, traditionally considered to be the four elements of earth, water, fire, and air.
661. Literally, “Dense Array.”
662. That is, the approaches of the śrāvaka, pratyekabuddha, and bodhisattva.
663. That is, perfect buddhahood—the supreme state of nirvāṇa that is not confined to the extremes of continued confusion in a state of conditioned existence on the one hand, or mere personal salvation from suffering at the expense of others’ welfare on the other.
664. Nāgārjuna, *Source Verses on Sublime Intelligence*, chap. 18, v. 7, (Toh. 3824), Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. Tsa, p. 21, l. 2.
665. Asaṅga, *Compendium of Abhidharma*, (Toh. 4048), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Ri, p. 181, l. 3.
666. Ibid., lines 3–4.
667. Ibid., lines 4–5.
668. Ibid., l. 5.
669. The residual traces referred to are those of the five ordinary mind-body aggregates, the experience of which is based on some degree of ignorance still functioning in the arhat’s mind.
670. Maitreya, *Ornament of Manifest Realization*, chap. 1, v. 43, (Toh. 3786), Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, p. 6, lines 3–4.

671. The Sanskrit term “buddha” is derived from the root *budh*; among its many connotations are “to awaken” and “to unfold, expand, blossom.” The Tibetan equivalent (*sangs rgyas*) is a compound term that incorporates both meanings—the first component (*sangs*) has the sense of “to awaken,” while the second component (*rgyas*) means “to unfold, expand.” The derivation of the term given by Kongtrul conforms most directly to the Tibetan term, of course.
672. That is, knowledge of the true nature of things just as it is and knowledge of all phenomena in their multiplicity.
673. Source not identified.
674. These are the twofold manifestations of enlightened being in form, that is, sambhogakāya and nirmāṇakāya. The consummate reinforcement of merit in spiritual practice culminates in these manifesting, respectively, in the perceptions of beings to be guided who are (in spiritual terms) purified or not yet purified.
675. Nāgārjuna, *Precious Garland*, chap. 3, v. 13, (Toh. 4158), Dg. T., sPrin yig, vol. Ge, p. 229, lines 1–2.
676. Literally, “under nothing.”
677. That is, the three realms of saṃsāra—the realm of desire, the realm of form, and the formless realm.
678. The term “immaculate abodes” here refers to both the immaculate abode (“Akanishṭha of the realm of form”) that is not included in saṃsāra and the five uppermost levels of the realm of form in saṃsāra, which are collectively referred to as “immaculate abodes.”
679. This verse is not found in the version of the sūtra found in the Dergé edition. In *The Precious Treasury of Philosophical Systems*, 10, however, Longchenpa cites the same lines, as well as the following:

The Buddha did not actually awaken to buddhahood
in the realm of desire or in the realm of formlessness;
you, who were free of desire and attachment, became a buddha
in Akanishṭha in the realm of form.

These lines are found in *Journey to Śrī Laṅkā*, (Toh. 107), Dg. K., mDo sde, vol. Ca, p. 374, l. 1.

680. Maitreya, *Ornament of the Sūtras*, chap. 10, v. 65cd, (Toh. 4020), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 22, l. 3:
681. That is, dharmakāya is the support for the two rūpakāyas, and of the rūpakāyas, sambhogakāya is the support for nirmāṇakāya.
682. Ibid., chap. 20, v. 56, (Toh. 4020), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 68, l. 7. Kongtrul interprets this verse from the point of view of the “ontological” status of the kāyas themselves. See Vasubandhu’s commentary on this verse, which is more from the point of view of how someone with realization experiences the kāyas, in his *Explanation of the “Ornament of the Sūtras,”* Toh. 4026, Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 492, lines 4–5:

The fact that what does not exist in actuality—the ordinary indications of things—does not manifest [that is, in the perception of someone with realization], while what does “exist” in actuality—suchness—does manifest, should be understood to be a case of differing contexts. They are, respectively, manifest and nonmanifest, and that is what should be understood to

be liberation. Why is this so, you ask? Because there is enjoyment of all one could desire, for at that point one has gained independent control, not in any way experiencing the ordinary indications of things, and so has gained control over one's own mind.

683. Daśabalaśrimitra, *Ascertaining the Conditioned and Unconditioned*, (Toh. 3897), Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. Ha, p. 579, lines 4–5.
684. The *-tā* suffix (Tib. *nyid*) makes abstract nouns (as in *sūnya/stong pa*, “empty” + *tā/nyid*, “ness”); the term *dharmatā* (phenomena-ness) refers to the true or ultimate nature of phenomena.
685. “Twofold purity” refers to the fact that the very essence of being itself is, by its nature, primordially pure, while at the same time this purity is newly discovered by the individual awakening to it.
686. Maitreya, *Ornament of Manifest Realization*, chap. 8, v. 1, (Toh. 3786), Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, p. 21, l. 7 through p. 22, l. 1.
687. Asaṅga, *Summary of the Mahāyāna Approach*, (Toh. 4048), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Ri, p. 73, l. 4.
688. These are afflictive, cognitive, and karmic obscurations. Alternatively, the three levels may be those of afflictive obscurations, cognitive obscurations, and obscurations to meditative equipoise.
689. Literally, “Dense Array.”
690. Maitreya, *Ornament of Manifest Realization*, chap. 8, v. 12cd, (Toh. 3786), Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, p. 22, l. 7.
691. Ibid., v. 12, (Toh. 3786), Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, p. 22, l. 7.
692. That is, the buddhas of the five families—Vairocana, Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, and Amoghasiddhi.
693. That is to say, there is no thing that exists in and of itself, with some nature independent of everything else, that can ultimately be identified as “this” or “that.”
694. That is, the certainty of abiding solely in a pure realm as its environment, the certainty of manifesting with all major and minor marks of perfect form, the certainty of being surrounded by a retinue made up entirely of bodhisattvas, the certainty of teaching solely the Mahāyāna teachings, and the certainty of remaining until saṃsāra comes to an end. These are also referred to as the “five aspects of excellence.”
695. That is, the foregoing eight characteristics of retinue, realm, embodiments, attributes, teachings, deeds, spontaneous presence, lack of independent nature; those of fivefold certainty are an alternative description of these eight.
696. That is, the aforementioned “Akaniṣṭha of the realm of form.”
697. The “abiding mode” (Tib. *gnas tshul*) refers to the way any given phenomenon “is” in itself—that is, the ultimate nature of any aspect of reality, the nature that is not defined by, altered by, or in any way dependent on such circumstances as time or space. The “manifest mode” (Tib. *snang tshul*) refers to way in which any given phenomenon presents itself and is experienced on the relative level.
698. That is, their activity as buddhas are the result of aspirations they formulated as bodhisattvas on the path of training.
699. Maitreya, *Ornament of the Sūtras*, chap. 10, v. 26, (Toh. 4020), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 18, l. 6. The verse as cited by Kongtrul reverses the order of the second

- and third lines in the source. And in the source, the fourth line reads: "so there is neither a unity nor a multiplicity."
700. That is, to the *nirmāṇakāya*, or manifestation of enlightened embodiment in physical form. The same principle of ultimately "neither one nor many" applies to *nirmāṇakāya* buddhas.
701. *Indrabhūti, Presence of Timeless Awareness*, (Toh. 2219), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Wi, p. 83, lines 3–4.
702. *Daśabalaśrimitra, Ascertaining the Conditioned and Unconditioned*, (Toh. 3897), Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. Ha, p. 580, l. 3.
703. The three kinds of enlightenment are those of a śrāvaka arhat, a pratyekabuddha arhat, and a bodhisattva (that is, buddhahood).
704. The attainment of supreme enlightenment and the passing into *nirvāṇa* are the two most important of the twelve deeds of a sublime *nirmāṇakāya*, the third kind enumerated here.
705. *Maitreya, Ornament of the Sūtras*, chap. 10, v. 64, (Toh. 4020), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 22, lines 2–3.
706. Gandharvas are the musicians of the gods' realms; the example refers to an incident described in the sūtra tradition, in which the Buddha emanated as a skilled musician whose expertise with the lute so fascinated the gandharvas that they became receptive to the spiritual teachings of that emanation.
707. This is a reference to two of the most popular accounts found in the Jātaka tales of the Buddha's former lifetimes. See Khoroché, *Once the Buddha Was a Monkey*, 32–38 and 178–85; Meiland, *Garland of the Buddha's Past Lives*, vol. 1, pp. 109–31; and Speyer, *The Gātakalmālā, or Garland of Birth Stories*, 37–45 and 227–33.
708. While the same term in Tibetan (*bdag*, the equivalent of the Sanskrit term "ātman") is used to mean an individual "self" in the ordinary sense and what is here translated as "sacred presence," it is the context that determines the significance of the term. Some commentators state that the use of such terms as *bdag* or *rtag pa* (literally, "permanence," here rendered in this context as "constancy") were intentional devices to make the teachings concerning the buddha nature more accessible to those used to thinking in terms of such attributes.
709. That is to say, forever, since space is not a conditioned phenomenon but a mere absence of obstruction.
710. *Holy Golden Light*, (Toh. 556), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Pa, ff. 151b–273a.
711. *Maitreya, Ornament of the Sūtras*, chap. 10, v. 66ab (Toh. 4020), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 318, l. 7 through p. 319, l. 1.
712. *Ibid.*, v. 66cd, (Toh. 4020), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 319, l. 1.
713. Anonymous, *Two-Volume Glossary*, (Toh. 4347), Dg. T., sNa tshogs, vol. Co, p. 268, l. 7 through p. 269, l. 1.
714. Philosophically, "exaggeration" means to affirm anything that is not the case as being so, while "denial" means to deny anything that is the case as being so. In the most fundamental sense, this means to affirm that phenomena actually exist just as they seem, or deny that they exist at all, both of which are extremes from the Buddhist point of view.
715. *Maitreya, Highest Continuum*, chap. 2, v. 38, (Toh. 4024), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 126, l. 7 through p. 127, l. 1.
716. In the model of ordinary mind that involves eight avenues of consciousness (used

particularly by the Cittamātra school of Buddhist philosophy), this term refers to that aspect of ordinary mind that is unaffected by obscuration and karmically “neutral” and that serves as the basis for the formation of habitual patterns. It thus provides a support for the all aspects of the karmic process—both the complete maturation of its natural consequences and the potentials—and is aware of the essential qualities of the objects of one’s experience (that is, the aspect of any given phenomenon that serves as a basis for its specific characteristics).

717. Anonymous, *Two-Volume Glossary*, (Toh. 4347), Dg. T., sNa tshogs, vol. Co, p. 268, l. 7 through p. 269, lines 1–2.
718. Maitreya, *Ornament of the Sūtras*, chap. 10, v. 68, (Toh. 4020), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 22, lines 4–5.
719. These lines in the scriptural source read slightly differently: “As for the term *samatā-jñāna*, initially, on the first bodhisattva level, when there is actual realization of the significance of suchness itself, . . .”
720. Anonymous, *Two-Volume Glossary*, (Toh. 4347), Dg. T., sNa tshogs, vol. Co, p. 269, lines 2–4.
721. That is, the first four of the five paths—those of accumulation, linking, seeing, and meditation. These are discussed extensively in Book 9, Part 1.
722. Maitreya, *Ornament of the Sūtras*, chap. 10, v. 70, (Toh. 4020), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 22, lines 5–6.
723. An avenue of ordinary consciousness that functions on the basis of a “mental faculty” in knowing the qualities and properties specific to phenomena. It is this avenue of consciousness that coordinates the data received through the senses, organizes them into a coherent picture of the phenomenal world, and ties this in with one’s concepts and ideas about it.
724. These are some of the ten powers that pertain to the level of buddhahood, which are discussed below.
725. That is, it is in their nature to do so.
726. Anonymous, *Two-Volume Glossary*, (Toh. 4347), Dg. T., sNa tshogs, vol. Co, p. 269, lines 4–5.
727. Maitreya, *Ornament of the Sūtras*, chap. 10, v. 72, (Toh. 4020), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 22, l. 7.
728. Anonymous, *Two-Volume Glossary*, (Toh. 4347), Dg. T., sNa tshogs, vol. Co, p. 269, lines 5–6.
729. Maitreya, *Ornament of the Sūtras*, chap. 10, v. 74, (Toh. 4020), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 23, l. 1.
730. The source reads: “Consider the seeds of the habitual patterns . . .”
731. Asaṅga, *Summary of the Mahāyāna Approach*, (Toh. 4048), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Ri, p. 20, l. 7.
732. The source has a slightly different reading of this line: “there is buddhahood itself, the attainment endowed with the transformation of the most excellent of positive qualities.”
733. Maitreya, *Ornament of the Sūtras*, chap. 10, v. 12, (Toh. 4020), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 17, lines 4–5.
734. Ibid., v. 76, (Toh. 4020), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 23, l. 2.
735. Source not identified. Candragomin was a seventh-century Indian Buddhist poet and master of the Cittamātra school who authored, among other works, poems and plays on the theme of the bodhisattva path.

736. Āryadeva, *Four Hundred Verses*, v. 350a (Toh. 3849), Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. Tsha, p. 31, l. 5.
737. Vasubandhu, *Treasury of Abhidharma*, chap. 1, v. 28cd, (Toh. 4089), Dg. T., mNgon pa, vol. Ku, p. 5, l. 3.
738. *Level of Buddhahood*, (Toh. 275), Dg. K., mDo sde, vol. Ya, ff. 36a–44b. Kongtrul is summarizing the discussions found in this sūtra rather than citing directly from it.
739. *Request of Suvikrānta-vikrami*, (Toh. 14) Dg. K., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, 20a–103b. This is one of the texts in the Miscellany (sNa tshogs) section of the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras. Again, Kongtrul is paraphrasing rather than citing from this sūtra.
740. A common statement made is that the actual nature of phenomena has no manifest quality, but a more accurate statement is that the actual nature is inseparable from the manifestations of phenomena.
741. The blockprint of Kongtrul's text has, in error, *bden* (valid) for *dben* (devoid).
742. Jñānagarbha, *Two Levels of Truth*, vv. 8a and 37cd, (Toh. 3881), Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. Sa, p. 3, l. 2 and p. 5, l. 5.
743. That is, it is experienced just as it appears, as distinct from and unadulterated by one's conceptual assumptions about it.
744. *Journey to Śrī Laṅkā*, (Toh. 107), Dg. K., mDo sde, vol. Ca, p. 330, l. 4. In the source, the first line reads:

The approach of one's individual self-knowing awareness . . .

745. Dharmakīrti, *Detailed Commentary on Valid Cognition*, chap. 3, v. 527, (Toh. 4210), Dg. T., Tshad ma, vol. Ce, p. 276, lines 6–7.
746. That is, it is incorrect to assume naïvely that ordinary mind per se equals timeless awareness; timeless awareness is only the case once one's experience of the avenues of ordinary consciousness has been transformed.
747. The woodblock print has, in error, "fourth," but the topic is, in fact, the third.
748. The source has a slightly different version of this line: "As the fruition of the processes of divestment and complete maturation, . . ."
749. Maitreya, *Highest Continuum*, chap. 3, v. 1, (Toh. 4024), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 130, lines 1–2.
750. This power concerns what it is "appropriate" to expect will result from the interdependence of causes and conditions within the relative context of truth—that is, how the process of cause and effect is known to function according to the ordinary laws of relative reality. Even in the case of miraculous powers and so forth, "natural laws" are at work that allow for such extraordinary events within the relative framework. This power entails knowledge that:
- (1) karma and negative emotions are the causes for ordinary beings' taking rebirth, and that the cause for this process does not lie in a "self" or soul, some external force, a creator god, or the like;
 - (2) committing positive actions appropriately leads to rebirth in higher realms and does not lead to rebirth in lower realms (which would be "inappropriate"); and
 - (3) committing negative actions appropriately leads to rebirth in lower realms and does not lead to rebirth in higher realms (which, again, would be "inappropriate").
751. This power also entails a knowledge of the positive and negative karmic effects of actions, and any admixture of these, as well as of the results that come from any of these.

752. In this context, the approaches of the śrāvaka, pratyekabuddha, and bodhisattva.
753. That is, this power entails knowledge of the following:
- (1) the different types of beings (those of the three spiritual approaches, those who are undecided, and those who lack the fortune in their present lifetime for any spiritual development);
 - (2) the specific combinations of personal destiny and habitual tendencies that beings possess; and
 - (3) the components that make up an ordinary being's experience (that is, sense faculties, avenues of consciousness, and the sense objects perceived).
754. This power entails knowledge of the specific aspirations of beings—that some aspire to the lower approach of the śrāvaka, some to the intermediate approach of the pratyekabuddha, some to the higher approach of the Mahāyāna, some to being generous, some to being disciplined, some to developing meditative stability, and so forth.
755. "Path" in this context does not necessarily denote a spiritual (or even positive) path but simply the direction a given being's life may take, leading to a particular destiny in terms of rebirth. This power entails knowledge of all such paths, whether authentic or misguided, whether leading to a certain state of enlightenment, or to lower or higher states of rebirth.
756. Since positive tendencies in one's makeup, reinforced by positive actions, are not lost upon death but continue to have effect lifetime after lifetime, the power that comes even with advanced spiritual realization (let alone buddhahood) allows for this continuity of experience to be recalled. Although negative tendencies also have this continuity under ordinary circumstances, these are being refined away through spiritual development, until only the positive influences are present. This power entails knowledge that provides unhindered access to the memories of the environments in which oneself and all other beings were reborn in past lifetimes, as well as what causes were responsible for these rebirths and what experiences were undergone.
757. This power entails knowledge of all the situations in which all beings died again and again under certain circumstances and were reborn again and again under others.
758. This power entails knowledge of the specific situations in which beings experience all that is corruptible—afflictive states and so forth—coming to an end.
759. Earth, water, fire, and air.
760. Undiminishing diligence means that a buddha is committed to teaching the dharma, even for the sake of a single being, for eons.
761. Undiminishing mindfulness means that buddhas are not limited to the short-term attention that arhats experience, for their timeless awareness ensures that what was previously known—the actions of all beings, their thoughts, latent potentials, their spiritual capacities, which antidotes will address which of their specific problems, and so forth—is retained in memory.
762. The faculty of sublime intelligence is that of coming to an unerring conclusion concerning the characteristics of phenomena. It is undiminishing in that it entails knowledge of the conduct of ordinary beings and the enormous range of spiritual teachings, as well as an inexhaustible awareness that ensures benefit for beings.
763. That is, the three foregoing points of diligence, mindfulness, and the faculty of sublime intelligence.

764. Śrāvakas become absorbed in a biased state of quiescence, and so are free only of the afflictive obscurations for the time being; this is called a “diminished” state of freedom. Buddhas, being free of both the afflictive and cognitive obscurations, have attained “nirvāṇa that transcends all extremes,” and so enjoy an undiminishing state of total freedom to act for the sake of beings for as long as saṃsāra endures.
765. This sūtra is referred to in the *Highest Continuum*, chap. 3, v. 26, (Toh. 4024) Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 132, lines 5–6. I have been unable to locate the text of the sūtra itself; it is possible that it existed as a source when the *Highest Continuum* first appeared in India but was no longer available when texts were being brought to Tibet for translation and inclusion in the canon.
766. Maitreya, *Highest Continuum*, chap. 3, v. 11b–d, (Toh. 4024), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 131, l. 2:
- As for will, diligence, mindfulness,
sublime intelligence, total freedom,
and the enlightened perspective of total freedom, they know no
diminishing of these.
767. That is, the fourth of the six qualities that fall under the heading of conduct.
768. That is, engaging in actions of three kinds—physical, verbal, and mental.
769. Ibid., v. 12a, (Toh. 4024), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 131, l. 2.
770. That is, the enlightened perspective of unattached and unimpeded timeless awareness concerning events in the past, present, and future.
771. These are discussed in Kongtrul, *Treasury of Knowledge: Book Six, Part Three: Frameworks of Buddhist Philosophy*.
772. Vasubandhu, *Treasury of Abhidharma*, chap. 7, v. 28ab, (Toh. 4089), Dg. T., mNgon pa, vol. Ku, p. 44, l. 5.
773. That is, that a buddha’s mind rests in mindfulness without attachment toward those who have respect for and listen to the Tathāgata’s teachings, without attachment toward those who have no respect and do not listen to the Tathāgata’s teachings, and without distinguishing between those who listen and those who do not.
774. In his own commentary to his source verses, Vasubandhu defines this compassion as being produced by the twofold development of merit and timeless awareness; entailing an awareness of not only overt suffering but also its more subtle and latent aspects; embracing all beings throughout the three realms of desire, form, and formlessness; being completely impartial; and being without equal.
775. See Maitreya, *Ornament of Manifest Realization*, chap. 8, vv. 1–6, (Toh. 3786), Dg. T., Ses phyin, vol. Ka, p. 21, l. 7 through p. 22, l. 3.
776. The four immeasurable attitudes are those of love, compassion, joy, and impartiality. They are also called “the four Brahmā abodes” because when they are cultivated within an ordinary mundane context (that is, without the transformative motivation of bodhicitta), they bring about the positive result of rebirth among the Mahābrahma gods of the realm of form, whose minds are constantly absorbed in these states. The Mahābrahma gods dwell in the highest of the gods’ realms associated with the first level of meditative stability.
777. These are called “modes of complete liberation” because their function is to liberate

one's mind from factors that would prevent it from attaining higher states of meditative equipoise. See Vasubandhu, *Treasury of Abhidharma*, chap. 8, vv. 32–34, (Toh. 4089), Dg. T., mNgon pa, vol. Ku, p. 48, l. 7 through p. 49, l. 1.

778. That is, without having first analyzed one's own mind-body, one analyzes external forms by reducing them to emptiness and so determines that they have no true existence.
779. That is, having first analyzed the components of one's own mind-body to reduce them to emptiness (and thus thinking of one's inner consciousness as having no form), one then analyzes external forms by reducing them to emptiness and so determines that that emptiness has no true existence.
780. The first two modes of liberation involve contemplation of what is unattractive in forms, to liberate one from the usual emotional reactions of attachment to some perceived beauty where none exists; in the third mode, the focus shifts to the contemplation of what one finds attractive in forms, to liberate one from the usual reactions of attachment to these. The first two modes create some psychological sense of "distance," so that one does not simply become caught up in ordinary reactions of attachment and fascination; one can then move to the third mode, shifting the focus from what is unattractive to what is ordinarily attractive.
781. These "four modes of liberation in formlessness," or modes of liberation associated with the formless realm, constitute the four states of the formless realm but imbued with the supportive component of sublime intelligence. These are states of meditative equipoise that liberate one from the emotionally contaminated attachments found in the realm of form and, in the case of each mode, those found in the formless states below it. These modes of liberation focus on the experiences of infinite space, infinite consciousness, nothingness, and neither perception nor nonperception.
782. The mode of liberation associated with cessation is that of the path of calm abiding, which entails the cessation of more obvious perceptions and sensations.
783. These eight states of equipoise are distinguished from the usual states of mundane meditation that lead to rebirth in the realms of form or formlessness; they involve mental focus and insight that free one of the attachments that are ordinarily part of such states of rebirth, and thus bring a degree of control over the mind in such states.
784. The equipoise of cessation is a meditative state that brings about the cessation of more obvious perceptions and sensations—that is, the seven avenues of ordinary consciousness. The eighth avenue, that of consciousness as the basis of all ordinary experience, continues.
785. The states of total immersion are those experienced by practitioners who have gained power through meditative stability, so that they can transform their perception at will to be entirely that of one of the four elements and so forth. The term "total immersion" indicates the infinite scope of such perception. The ten states are those of the four elements (earth, water, fire, and air), four basic colors (blue, yellow, red, and white), infinite space, and infinite consciousness. In each case, the power of one's meditative absorption is capable of transforming one's perception, so that if one focuses on earth, for example, everything in all directions is perceived to be made of earth. The first eight states are associated with the realms of desire and form; the latter two pertain to the formless realm. See Vasubandhu,

- Treasury of Abhidharma*, chap. 8, v. 36, (Toh. 4089), Dg. T., mNgon pa, vol. Ku, p. 49, l. 2.
786. The sense fields that eclipse ordinary perceptions are achieved on the basis of meditative absorption, so that however one conceives of such characteristics as shape, color, and so forth, all other perceptions are eclipsed. The eight sense fields are four concerning shape and four concerning color, making eight in total. See Vasubandhu, *Treasury of Abhidharma*, chap. 8, v. 35, (Toh. 4089), Dg. T., mNgon pa, vol. Ku, p. 49, lines 1–2. These eight sense fields are connected with the eight modes of complete liberation; the latter liberate one from attachment to objects that would otherwise provoke attachment and other emotional reactions, while the sense fields bring such mastery that these reactions can no longer take place.
787. This intelligence, which allows for omniscience, comes about as the fulfillment of previous aspirations to gain such knowledge.
788. A purely rhetorical expression; the state of total freedom is atemporal.
789. See note 263.
790. Complete purity of body means gaining the mastery to transform one's body into any specific form desired. With complete purity of attention, one gains the mastery to transform the object of one's attention to anything desired. Complete purity of mind entails mastery over limitless states of meditative absorption. Complete purity of timeless awareness refers to knowing all phenomena, without attachment or limitation.
791. See Book 9, Part 1.
792. Source not identified; it is possible that Kongtrul himself composed these verses as a mnemonic device.
793. The three factors that need not be closely guarded are a buddha's enlightened form, speech, and mind; since these do not involve the slightest flaw, they also do not involve anything that needs to be kept from others or closely guarded in any way.
794. The term "spiritually advanced being" (Skt. *ārya*; Tib. *'phags pa*) denotes not just buddhas, but (as here) all who have attained at least the path of seeing in either the Hīnayāna or Mahāyāna approaches.
795. "Omniscience" refers to the timeless awareness that is unique to buddhahood, the consummate knowledge that consists of direct realization, in any given instant, of both the real nature of things, just as it is, and things in all their multiplicity. The Prajñāpāramitā literature (such as the *Ornament of Manifest Realization*) further analyzes omniscience into three aspects—complete knowledge of the existing situation of ordinary beings, complete knowledge of the spiritual path to buddhahood, and omniscience itself as the fruition state of buddhahood.
796. This discussion follows the enumeration found in Maitreya, *Highest Continuum*, chap. 3, vv. 16–24, (Toh. 4024), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 131, l. 6 through p. 132, l. 4. A slightly different enumeration is given in Maitreya, *Ornament of Manifest Realization*, chap. 8, vv. 12–17, (Toh. 3786), Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, p. 22, l. 7 through p. 23, l. 4.
797. A fabulous animal resembling a deer, with eight legs, possessed of enormous physical strength.
798. This is depicted in art by three parallel curved lines at a buddha's throat.
799. Skt. *uṣṇīṣa*; Tib. *gtsug tor*. "[The uṣṇīṣa] is said to extend beyond even the gods' realms. As this is impossible to portray, artists usually depict it as a large bump on

- the Buddha's head, but this is not how it appears to those who see the Buddha." Thrangu Rinpoche, *The Uttaratantra*, 449, n. 65.
800. The banyan tree grows in such a way that its height equals the width of the reach of its branches; similarly, a buddha's body is as tall as the distance between the outstretched fingertips.
801. Another name for the Brahmanical god Viṣṇu.
802. The woodblock of the *Treasury of Knowledge* erroneously has *sen mo rnams* (nails) for *sor mo rnams* (fingers).
803. It is important to emphasize that the swastika has an ancient and venerable history as a symbol of good fortune in many spiritual traditions (including Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism), despite the stigma attached to it in the West since its adoption in the early twentieth century as the symbol of the Nazi party.
804. Maitreya, *Ornament of Manifest Realization*, chap. 8, vv. 21–33a, (Toh. 3786), Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Ka; p. 23, l. 6 through p. 24, l. 6.
805. That is, the Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas.
806. In general, a synonym for the Cittamātra, or Mind Only school, which holds that all of phenomenal reality consists only of ideas in the mind.
807. That is, the major and minor marks have no existence in and of themselves but are merely ideas in the minds of those who perceive a buddha to have such marks.
808. These constitute a subdivision of the Svātantrika Madhyamaka school, which accepts that a single consciousness can exist on the relative level, although it does not accept that objects exist external to the perceiver.
809. Maitreya, *Highest Continuum*, chap. 4, v. 25, (Toh. 4024), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 135, lines 6–7.
810. See *Secrets of the Tathāgatas* (Toh. 47), Dg. K., dKon brtsegs, vol. Ka, p. 265, l. 6 through p. 266, l. 6; and Abhayākara Gupta, *Adornment of the Sage's Intent* (Toh. 3903), Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. A, p. 563, l. 2.
811. A fabulous animal with the lower half of a bird's body and wings, and the upper half of a human being's body.
812. Of enlightened form, speech, and mind.
813. Maitreya, *Highest Continuum*, chap. 4, v. 3, (Toh. 4024), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 134, l. 1.
814. Ibid., v. 12, (Toh. 4024), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 134, lines 6–7.
815. That is, the stage of development.
816. The stage of completion.
817. *Subsequent Tantra*, (Toh. 443), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, p. 307, l. 2.
818. Candrakīrti, *Illuminating Lamp*, (Toh. 1785), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Ha, p. 4, l. 2.
819. The source tantra reads simply "there are two aspects."
820. In the source tantra, this last line reads "and the nectar of timeless awareness (in the most sublime case)." *Subsequent Tantra*, (Toh. 443), Dg. T., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, p. 307, l. 4. The four vajras are a format for practice in the stage of development, whereas the six branches are a format for practice in the stage of completion.
821. The structure of the Kālacakra empowerment involves a particular division of the four levels of empowerment: the first level has seven stages, followed by the three "higher" empowerments (that is, the second, third, and fourth levels).
822. "Spiritual heroes" is a term for dākas, "yoginis" for dākinīs.
823. Manoharī is a wealth deity; the legend concerning her origin mentions the gem as the symbol of her spiritual accomplishments.

824. That is, the eight qualities of powerful mastery, discussed below.
825. Jinaputra composed two commentaries on Asaṅga's *Compendium of Abhidharma: An Explanation of the "Compendium of Abhidharma"* and *A Detailed Explanation of the "Compendium of Abhidharma."*
826. That is, subtle energy.
827. The superior approach (that of mahāmudrā, compared to a gem) is to control subtle energy by first controlling the mind; the lesser approach (that of caṇḍalī and the other higher yogic practices of the stage of completion in Vajrayāna, compared to an ordinary stone) is to control mind by first controlling subtle energy.
828. The third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje (Rang byung rdo rje, 1284–1339).
829. *Vajra Pavilion*, (Toh. 419), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, p. 105, l. 7. The *Vajra Pavilion* is the explanatory tantra of the Hevajra cycle.
830. Ibid.
831. Ibid. (Toh. 419), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, p. 106, l. 2.
832. *Vajra of Delight*, (Toh. 417), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, p. 45, l. 3.
833. *Source Tantra of the Circle of Bliss*, (Toh. 368), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, p. 476, lines 6–7.
834. That is, rendering someone mute, deaf, blind, or sterile.
835. These are listed in *Vajra Dāka*, (Toh. 370), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Kha, p. 12, l. 7 through p. 14, l. 1.
836. *Request by the Four Goddesses*, (Toh. 446), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, p. 559, line 7.
837. *Ocean of Dākas*, (Toh. 372), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Kha, p. 351, l. 7.
838. A tantra such as the *Vajra Pavilion* usually takes the form of a first-person pronouncement by a buddha or deity, often (although not exclusively) from a masculine perspective.
839. *Vajra Pavilion*, (Toh. 419), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, p. 73, l. 7 through p. 74, l. 1.
840. That is, the earth, the heavens, and the underworld.
841. *Wheel of Time*, (Toh. 362), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, p. 188, l. 4.
842. Ibid., (Toh. 362), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, p. 238, lines 4–5.
843. *Source Tantra of the Circle of Bliss*, (Toh. 368), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, p. 470, lines 3–4. In the source, the first line reads:

The activity of seeing underground, the sword, . . .

844. These are the precious wheel, gem, queen, minister, elephant, horse, and general.
845. An epithet of Sarasvatī, a feminine deity, who is associated with inspiring literary and artistic genius, like the muses of Greek mythology.
846. That is, the eight qualities of powerful mastery.
847. Equivalent to the more usual quality of pervasiveness.
848. Equivalent to the more usual quality of obvious form.
849. The realm of form consists of four levels of meditative stability, subdivided into seventeen realms of gods. The Brahmakāyika realm is the first, or lowest, of these seventeen, and the Akaniṣṭha realm (not to be confused with the sambhogakāya realm of the same name) is the last, or highest.
850. Śrīghoṣa, *Answers to Vajrasattva's Questions*, sNar thang bsTan 'gyur, rGyud 'grel, vol. Ru, p. 251, lines 4–5. In the source (which contains interlinear comments), the lines read as follows:

Through the body and the residues it entails, (formed from karma, in this very lifetime)

one gains the state of a master with power over longevity.

And unsurpassable enlightenment is attained through this very same longevity (of 1,600 years) of a master of awareness.

851. The term could literally be translated as “the enjoyment of space.”
852. Such flesh is traditionally held to transmit great blessings that can bring about the attainment of siddhi.
853. Abhayākara Gupta, *Frond of Pith Instructions*, (Toh. 1198), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Cha, p. 380, lines 3–5.
854. An idiom (Tib. *btsan sa zin pa*) for gaining an extremely stable state of realization, from which there is no regression.
855. A synonym for the term “emptiness that entails all possibilities,” or “emptiness endowed with the most sublime of all attributes”—that is, a field of infinite potential rather than a blank void state.
856. In ancient Indian astrology, Rāhu is a demon personified as a planet, held to be responsible for lunar and solar eclipses by swallowing the moon and sun and then regurgitating them. In the symbolism of the vajra yoga teachings, Rāhu represents the merging of the masculine (lunar) and feminine (solar) energies into a unity.
857. In this context, Kongtrul is referring to the advanced practices of the Vajrayāna traditions that fall within the category of the stage of completion, specifically its thematic phase. These are practices involving such constructs as physical postures and breathing exercises, visualizations, and so forth, which allow the practitioner to harness the subtle energies within the body and so bring about spiritual transformation. Such practices may be carried out alone (referred to as “one’s own body endowed with skillful method”), or with a sexual partner (referred to as “another’s body as the source of sublime intelligence”).
858. This masculine energy is described as being focused in the cakra in the crown of the head; whether one is male or female, it is received at the moment of conception from the father’s sperm. The tendency that this energy has to move downward when unstable is most pronounced during sexual orgasm and at the time of death (when the normal dissolution process forces it to descend to the cakra in the heart region).
859. In a manner similar to the masculine, lunar energy, the feminine energy is described as being focused in the subnavel region; both men and women receive it at the moment of their conception from the mother’s ovum. In its unstable mode, this energy has a tendency to move upward. At the time of death, the dissolution process forces it to ascend to the heart cakra.
860. Due to the male-dominant cultures in which the Vajrayāna teachings historically developed, the processes described in vajra yoga are invariably presented from a male perspective. While the existence of parallel teachings for women is always attested to by masters of these teachings, the literature is far less plentiful and more difficult to find.
861. Here, another term for the masculine energy.
862. That is, the *visarga* in Sanskrit, which indicates an aspirated vowel.

863. This is a term found in the Sarma traditions of Vajrayāna, especially in the Kālacakra cycle teachings. While emptiness as discussed in the sūtra tradition is never intended to be understood as a blank void, or nothingness, this term emphasizes the dynamic quality of emptiness as an open field of infinite possibility and potential.
864. A term denoting the indivisibility of two more aspects of a unity. Such aspects can nonetheless be treated as though they were distinct for the purposes of discussion.
865. A synonym for the sun (as that which delineates days from night), deriving from the traditional conventions of Indian epic poetry.
866. A synonym for the legendary planet Rāhu, held responsible for the darkness during an eclipse.
867. Puṇḍarīka, *Stainless Light*, Toh. (1347), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Tha, p. 272, lines 3–5. In this commentary, these verses are cited from the extensive version of the Kālacakra tantra, most of which was not translated into Tibetan. *Stainless Light* is the principal Indian commentary on the Kālacakra cycle.
868. Ibid., p. 221, lines 6–7.
869. That is, what is usually considered the name of the deity (such as “Glorious Wheel of Time” (Tib. *dpal dus kyi 'khor lo*; Skt. śrī kālacakra) in the previous citation) has a more ultimate connotation.
870. That is, the complete purification of mind through the elimination of ordinary concepts and afflictive states.
871. This takes place when the unity of subtle energy and mind has been focused in the heart center, so that the mind is freed of the more overt manifestations of the afflictive and cognitive obscurations.
872. That is, mind and subtle energy.
873. This external progression parallels the descriptions of the Buddha Śākyamuni’s experience of attaining enlightenment under the bodhi tree at Bodh Gaya.
874. The anticipatory phase is aroused through the practices involving a consort, which are the focus of the third of the four levels of empowerment, the empowerment into sublime intelligence and pristine awareness.
875. As noted earlier, manifest enlightenment in essence constitutes the pristine awareness that defines the path of seeing, although this initial realization must still be stabilized and deepened on the path of meditation.
876. The lunar masculine energy focused in the crown of the head. The “melting bliss” is generated by the controlled descent of the masculine energy from the crown of the head, a process effected in meditation.
877. The aspects of manifest enlightenment are often described as five in number. In this context they apply to the thematic phase of the stage of completion. A slightly different grouping of five aspects applies to the stage of development and the process of visualizing deities.
878. Again, here a reference to the white, or masculine, energy.
879. The solar feminine energy focused in the subnavel region.
880. The Tibetan honorific term for “body” (*sku*) is used here, rather than the more common term *lus*. In the context of these practices, which pertain to the stage of completion, one has already gained stability in the stage of development, in which one’s perceptions of an ordinary flesh-and-blood body are transformed into those of the form of a deity, apparent yet insubstantial, like a reflection in a mirror.

881. In the context of visualization practice associated with the stage of development, the term “symbolic emblem” refers to the insignia held in the hands of deities, which expresses the qualities of enlightened mind. Here the term has the more subtle connotation of the unity of bliss and emptiness.
882. That is, dharmakāya from one’s own perspective and rūpakāya from the perspective of others.
883. The Tibetan term (*byang chub kyi sems*, the equivalent of the Sanskrit “bodhicitta”) used in such contexts refers to the masculine and feminine energies; the analogy is that of the unity of compassion and emptiness that the term connotes in the Mahāyāna teachings and the unity of bliss and emptiness in the Vajrayāna context. The physical elements referred to are involved in the digestive process, which refines the nutritive essence of food down to the most subtle level of bindu.
884. That is, the explanation common to the father and mother tantras.
885. The principal cycle in the father tantra class of Anuttarayoga.
886. The Tibetan term (*nye rgyu’i spyod pa*) is a euphemistic reference to the practice with a consort described above.
887. That is, sambhogakāya emanations manifesting to one in a visionary context; however, this is not intended to mean a purely subjective experience.
888. That is (in equivalent terms from the sūtra tradition), up to the very limit of the final phase of the tenth bodhisattva level, when one is “on the brink” of awakening to buddhahood as the very next step.
889. Āryadeva, *Lamp That Integrates Conduct*, (Toh. 1803), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Ngi, p. 176, line 5 through p. 178, l. 2.
890. See Book 9, Part 3, in the section on “Conduct in the Anuttara Tantras”; the three kinds of conduct are the elaborate, the unelaborate, and the extremely unelaborate.
891. These are techniques employed in the stages of both development and completion to dissolve a visualized construct. “Instantaneous collapse” involves dissolving the entire construct at once, reducing it to a formless state of awareness, while “gradual dissolution” involves dismantling the visualization step by step, until the mind is brought into a formless context.
892. Āryadeva, *Lamp That Integrates Conduct*, (Toh. 1803), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Ngi, p. 184, l. 6 through p. 186, l. 3.
893. This idiom refers to advanced yogic practices that are carried out alone (also termed “one’s own body endowed with skillful method”).
894. In this particular treatment, the primordial unity of instantaneous collapse and gradual dissolution is also counted as one aspect.
895. That is, the dualistic framework of subject, object, and their interrelationship.
896. These are mentioned in Book 9, Part 4, in the discussion of the path of application associated with the Mahāyoga approach.
897. As distinct from a more deliberate and conceptually based process of visualization, as is the case on lower levels of spiritual development.
898. The issue of purity is not connected to the actual nature of the enlightened embodiment. Given the circumstances under which they manifest, sambhogakāya is considered pure compared to the relative impurity of nirmāṇakāya; on the other hand, nirmāṇakāya embodiments that manifest in higher states of rebirth are considered pure compared to those that manifest in lower states.

899. These are discussed below, in the treatment of primordial unity on the path of no more training.
900. See Book 9, Part 2, in the section on the path of meditation in the Vajrayāna, and below, in the treatment of primordial unity on the path of no more training.
901. The usual basis is that of the “mental body” that beings ordinarily experience during the intermediate state after death.
902. In other contexts, this idiom can also have the simple connotation of “directly realizing emptiness.” As Kongtrul is pointing out, context is often everything in evaluating the meaning of a term or idiom.
903. Āryadeva, *Lamp That Integrates Conduct*, (Toh. 1803), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Ngi, p. 210, lines 6–7.
904. That is, although texts of the śrāvaka and Mahāyāna approaches both use the idiom “to behold the truth,” the implications of the Mahāyāna interpretation of that event are much greater than is the case for śrāvakas.
905. That is, that of the Mahāyāna interpretation of beholding the truth.
906. That is, the Vajrayāna interpretation of beholding the truth currently under discussion.
907. *Compendium concerning the Glorious Vajra of Timeless Awareness*, (Toh. 447), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, p. 465, lines 6–7.
908. That is, just as the reflection of the moon can appear wherever there is a surface of water capable of reflecting.
909. The term “hallucination” can refer (as it does here) to the specific case of a cairn of stones seen from a distance being mistaken for a standing human figure.
910. A kind of *fata morgana* caused by certain atmospheric conditions over large open areas, such as plateaux or wide valleys. The appearance is one of a large city of buildings formed among the clouds, populated by gandharvas, known from Vedic times as the “musicians of the gods.”
911. With the attainment of the illusory body, one becomes capable of emanating multiple forms that can appear in different places simultaneously. The biographies of the mahāsiddhas of ancient India, for example, abound in such accounts of their feats.
912. Both the woodblock and the typeset editions have “primordial unity that involves training,” but in context it would seem the text should read “primordial unity that involves no more training.” A space in the woodblock suggests that a syllable broke off, leading to a textual error that was preserved in the typeset edition (which can generally be relied on to have corrected the more obvious errors in the woodblock).
913. The distinction being made is that even though the impure aggregates have ceased to function, technically one has not actually died (in the sense of discarding the body in the usual process of dying), and so one can be considered to have attained buddhahood in that very lifetime.
914. *Wheel of Time*, (Toh. 362), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, p. 234, lines 6–7.
915. According to ancient Vedic lore adopted by the Buddhist tradition as part of the ordinary world view, the Trayastriṃśa (“Thirty-three”) gods in the realm of desire dwell on the summit of Sumeru (the *axis mundi*) and consist of eight gods of wealth, ten gods of wrath, twelve solar gods, and the two “sons of the Aśvins,” the thirty-third being Indra, who rules over the others.

916. The source tantra here adds “tambouras” (an unfretted upright string instrument).
917. *Well-Sealed Locket*, (Toh. 381), Dg. K., rGyud ’bum, vol. Ga, p. 312, l. 3 through p. 313, l. 3.
918. The *Discourse Requested by Dhāraṇīśvararāja* is mentioned in Roerich, *The Blue Annals*, book 2, 459. The title may refer to a section within a larger sūtra, the *Discourse That Definitively Presents the Supreme Compassion of the Tathāgatas*, (Toh. 147), Dg. K. mDo sde, vol. Pa, ff. 142a–242b; or it may be an alternative title for this sūtra. The lines as cited by Kongtrul do not appear in the source. There are, however, two lines that are similar (p. 403, l. 7 through p. 404, l. 1):
- Resolution is not resolution due to an antidote;
there is already resolution, and therefore it is termed “resolution.”
919. Vagīśvarakīrti, *Seven Branches*, (Toh. 1888), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Pi, p. 379, lines 4–5.
920. The term connotes more than “unconditional” compassion; rather, it is compassion that is an innate quality of being, not requiring any dualistic conceptual framework of subject and object to be elicited.
921. A reference to the Indian master Buddhaśrījñāna, whose writings form the basis for one of the two major lineages of teachings focusing on the Guhyasamāja cycle of Anuttarayoga tantra.
922. Another name for the Brahmanical deity Viṣṇu.
923. Because one’s form has become more subtle than an ordinary flesh-and-blood body.
924. Buddhaśrījñāna, *Oral Transmission of Mañjuśrī*, (Toh. 1853), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Di, p. 25, lines 2–3.
925. Candrakīrti, *Illuminating Lamp*, (Toh. 1785), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Ha, p. 366, l. 1.
926. That of śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and bodhisattvas.
927. See Book 10, Part 2.
928. A Sanskrit loan word in Tibetan, literally meaning “birth canal, vagina” (not “womb,” for the emphasis is on the metaphor for spiritual birth, not gestation).
929. *Vajra Garland*, (Toh. 445), Dg. K., rGyud ’bum, vol. Ca, p. 526, l. 5.
930. *Well-Sealed Locket*, (Toh. 381), Dg. K., rGyud ’bum, vol. Ga, p. 313, lines 4–5.
931. *Definitive Commentary on Enlightened Intent*, (Toh. 106), Dg. K., mDo sde, vol. Ca, p. 2, l. 5.
932. “Kāya” and its Tibetan equivalent *sku* can both literally mean “body,” but this translation is wanting in the case of the kāyaś of buddhahood. See Dudjom Lingpa, *Buddhahood without Meditation*, 149: “and since it is, as it were, an amassing, or gathering, of all positive qualities and aspects of pristine awareness, it is ‘body’ [*kāya*, or *sku*].”
933. Mañjughoṣa Narendrakīrti, *Brief Presentation of the Tenets of View*, chap. 1, lines 135–36, P 4610, bsTan ’gyur dpe bsdur ma, vol. 42., p. 573. This text is not found in the sDe dge edition of the bsTan ’gyur; it is, however, included in the Peking edition. The “Mañjuśrī” may be a reference to the author of the treatise, Mañjughoṣa Narendrakīrti, or to the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, from whom the author mentions that he requested inspiration before composing the text.
934. Ibid., lines 101–4, P 4610, bsTan ’gyur dpe bsdur ma, vol. 42., pp. 572–73.

935. Ibid., lines 105–8, P 4610, bsTan 'gyur dpe bsdur ma, vol. 42., p. 573.
 936. Ibid., lines 109–12, P 4610, bsTan 'gyur dpe bsdur ma, vol. 42., p. 573.
 937. Ibid., lines 113–4., p. 573.
 938. See Longchen Rabjam, *The Precious Treasury of Philosophical Systems*, 30:

The dharma as scripture comprises the twelve branches of the Buddha's excellent speech as they are explained in *The Major Commentary on "The Eight Thousand Stanzas"*:

The categories of general discourses, discourses in verse, prophecies, didactic verses, aphorisms, morally instructive biographies, historical accounts, ethical directives, most extensive teachings, accounts of the Buddha's previous lives, teachings that define phenomena, and accounts of the marvelous qualities of enlightenment: thus, these twelve are the twelve branches of the Buddha's excellent speech.

939. Mañjughosa Narendrakīrti, *Brief Presentation of the Tenets of View*, chap. 1, lines 117–20, P 4610, bsTan 'gyur dpe bsdur ma, vol. 42, p. 573.
 940. Ibid., lines 121–24, P 4610, bsTan 'gyur dpe bsdur ma, vol. 42, p. 573.
 941. In such contexts, the use of the first person is a literary conceit to represent the state of total enlightenment—the perspective of buddhahood—and is not intended to be read literally as a specific individual speaking.
 942. Ibid., lines 125–34, P 4610, bsTan 'gyur dpe bsdur ma, vol. 42, pp. 573–74.
 943. Tib. *rTa mchog*, or *rTa'i rgyal po*. These are common epithets for the wrathful deity Hayagrīva.
 944. Tib. *rDo rje nyi ma*, or *gZi brjid rgyal po*.
 945. Tib. *Padma gar gyi dbang phyug*.
 946. Tib. *rGyal ba rtag pa*.
 947. See note 685.
 948. These are degrees of experience undergone when one gains control in meditation over the movement of the subtle energies, leading to the complete stabilization of these energies.
 949. Source not identified. These four ordinary states are the major ways in which the vacillation of the subtle energies is experienced by an ordinary being. While they constitute impure analogues of the four kāyas, as the source cited points out, they cannot be simply equated with the kāyas.
 950. That is, those who have attained one of the ten levels.
 951. These are the four feminine buddhas: Buddhālocana, Māmākī, Pāṇḍaravāsīnī, and Samayatārā.
 952. *Gathering of Secrets*, (Toh. 442), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, p. 284, lines 5–6 and line 7.
 953. Tib. *'du byed*; Skt. *samskara*. A difficult term to translate (the etymology literally means “to be put together”). The fourth of the five aggregates is something of a “catch-all” category, into which fall all the components of an ordinary being's experience that are not included in the other four aggregates. Most of these formative factors are mental states of volition or emotional response, while others, called “unassociated formative patterns,” are situational paradigms such as acquisition, production, and impermanence. The *Treasury of Abhidharma* by Vasubandhu lists

fourteen unassociated formative factors; some twenty-four factors are discussed in the *Compendium of Abhidharma* by Asaṅga. They are called “unassociated” because they are not directly associated with mind or consciousness, as are the formative factors that are volitional or emotional states.

954. These are six of the eight major bodhisattvas of the Mahāyāna tradition.
955. These are the objects of the “sixth sense,” the conceptual mind.
956. That is, the six sense organs and their respective objects.
957. The citation is actually from the second of the *Two Sections*, (Toh. 418), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, p. 32, lines 2–3.
958. That is, in the existing situation for ordinary beings, as distinct from the context of someone's following a spiritual path, or that of the fruition state.
959. In this context, a summary of the nineteen aggregates.
960. The source reads, “by the respective tathāgatas.”
961. The source reads, “. . . all the karma . . .”
962. The source reads, “. . . they abide as . . .”
963. Āryadeva, *Lamp That Integrates Conduct*, (Toh. 1803), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Ngi, p. 130, lines 4–6.
964. This is a variation of the model of the eight avenues of consciousness developed by the Cittamātrīn philosophers of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Presumably, the “three avenues of ordinary mind” are those of conceptual mind, emotionally affected consciousness, and consciousness as the basis of all ordinary experience, which here are considered as being common to the other five avenues of consciousness—visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile.
965. That is, the five situations in which consciousness, a sense faculty, and its respective object come together to produce a cognitive event.
966. These lists do not correspond to “standard” discussions of the five mind-body aggregates found in the Abhidharma literature; they would seem to be specific to the Vajrayāna context under discussion here.
967. Earth, water, fire, air, space, and consciousness.
968. *Sphere of the Secret Moon*, (Toh. 477), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ja, p. 597, l. 5. A source of the father tantra class. In the source the last two lines read as follows:

Due to the three factors of body, speech, and mind,
there are three specific spiritual approaches.
969. The source tantra reads “are the embodiments of the five buddhas.”
970. That is, the universal principle (the “sovereign lord”) that permeates all family types. In the source tantra, this line reads: “What is termed ‘supreme bliss’ is the state of oneness itself.”
971. *Authentic Conduct of Yoginis*, (Toh. 375), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ga, p. 79, l. 4. A source of the mother tantra class that gives a concise presentation of the stage of development. Kongtrul reproduced the last line in his source verses to this section.
972. *Gathering of Secrets*, (Toh. 442), Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, p. 187, line 4–5. The source reads as follows:

Consider your mind as taking the form of your body, your body as taking the form of your mind, your mind as being uttered in words.

973. *Commentary by Vajragarbha*, (Toh. 1180), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Ka, ff. 1b–126a.
974. Puṇḍarīka, *Stainless Light*, Toh. (1347), Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Da. See p. 527, lines 3–7.
975. See Book 10, Part 1.
976. Śāntigupta was an Indian master of the Vajrayāna Buddhist tradition, who would seem to have lived from perhaps the late fifteenth century until the mid-sixteenth century. Several of his Indian students, Buddhaguptanātha foremost among them, were teachers of the Tibetan master Tāranātha (1575–1634) of the Jonangpa school. For an account of the life of Śāntigupta, see Jo.nang Tāranātha, *Seven Instruction Lineages*, 82–97.
977. A term for the times of spiritual degeneration in which, from the traditional Buddhist point of view, we have been living for some centuries.
978. Maitreya, *Distinguishing Center and Limit*, chap. 1, v. 18a–b, (Toh. 4021), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 81, l. 3.
979. These are the factors involved in one's twofold development (Tib. *tsbogs gnyis bsags pa*) that brings about the attainment of the timeless awareness of buddhahood.
980. The two causal factors of merit and timeless awareness are counted as one characteristic.
981. A reference to the limited nirvāṇa attained by certain kinds of arhats.
982. Maitreya, *Highest Continuum*, chap. 1, v. 50c–d (Toh. 4024), Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, p. 113, l. 2.
983. That is, bodhisattvas on the highest levels of realization.
984. This ramification, described as “emanating in an instant” (*skad cig sprul*) in the source verses, refers not so much to actual forms emanating, which is the next (and final) ramification, but to the revelation of all that can be known.
985. That is, what is not intended is some mind-versus-matter dichotomy, with subtle energy having nothing to do with mind. Subtle energy is defined as the motile aspect of mind, and the connection between mind and subtle energy is metaphorically compared to a lame rider mounted on a blind horse; it is subtle energy that provides the “momentum” for mind, but consciousness pure and simple that provides the “direction.”
986. These seven groups of auxiliary ramifications—the five of profundity, the five of vast extent, the five of pervasiveness, the five of constancy, the seven of bliss, the seven of embodiment, and the six of primordial unity—make up the total of forty referred to previously.
987. This discussion parallels the former one concerning the sixteen steps of the path of seeing in the dialectical vehicle; see Book 9, Part 1.
988. That is, realization of the ultimate nature permeating everything as an “infinite array of innate purity.”
989. This is the karma that contributes to rebirth in the two higher realms of saṃsāra, those of form and formlessness.
990. That is to say, the path is merely the process of making evident (as the fruition state) what is already the case (the ground of being as it is and always has been).
991. That is, up to an including bodhisattvas on the tenth level of realization.
992. These are discussed in Book 9, Part 1.
993. That is, the four applications of knowledge of phenomena and the four applications of subsequent knowledge.

994. In this context, “bodhicitta” refers to the bindu that is harnessed and channeled through advanced yogic methods.
995. *Reciting the Names of Mañjuśrī*, chap. 9, v. 14d and chap. 6, v. 3d, (Toh. 360), Dg. K., rGyud ’bum, vol. Ka, p. 13, l. 7 and p. 6, l. 5.
996. This work would seem to be no longer extant and perhaps was never translated into Tibetan.
997. These are a parallel model to that of the śrāvaka approach, with its eight stages of initial entrance and stable abiding associated with the four states of a stream-winner, once-returner, nonreturner, and arhat.
998. Source not identified. This verse means that while one can speak conventionally of a practitioner’s realizing spontaneous presence, this does not imply a duality of someone experiencing and something being experienced, of someone making something else evident, but rather the nondual state of genuine being.
999. Vimalamitra, *Scriptural Synopsis*, NKSG, vol. 80, p. 751, lines 2–3.
1000. *Heart Essence of Secrets*, chap. 9, v. 33 (Toh. 832), Dg. K., rNying rgyud, vol. Kha, p. 240, l. 6.
1001. That is, timelessly free of all limitations, meaningful yet indescribable, not definable as some object, and identical to the enlightened intent of all buddhas.
1002. Anonymous, *Three Stages*, lines 134–35, P 4742, bsTan ’gyur dpe bsdur ma, vol. 43, p. 1176.
1003. That is, one follows the path of well-being, that of the bodhisattva, to arrive at the consummate state of well-being that is complete enlightenment, buddhahood.
1004. That is, one follows the path that focuses on suchness (which is not limited to the extremes of conditioned existence or mere personal salvation) and so arrives at the direct experience of that suchness.
1005. The Tibetan term *bcom ldan ’das* is richer in meaning than its Sanskrit equivalent *bhagavat*, which simply means “blessed” (hence the common usage in English translations of the title “Blessed One”). The Tibetan term encompasses the *transcendence* of the limiting extremes of conditioned existence and personal salvation, the *accomplishment* of all qualities of enlightenment (in particular the six magnificent qualities of powerful mastery, perfect form, splendor, renown, timeless awareness, and diligence in benefiting beings), and the victory of *conquering* the four māras.
1006. The Tibetan term *sangs rgyas* implies the “awakening” (*sangs*) due to the dispelling of the darkness of the two levels of afflictive and cognitive obscurations and the “unfolding” (*rgyas*) of the two aspects of enlightened awareness (that is, of things in all their multiplicity and of their ultimate nature, just as it is). Similarly, the Sanskrit root *budh* (from which the term “buddha” derives) has multiple connotations (“awaken,” “expand,” “blossom,” and so forth).
1007. Buddhaghūya, *Graduated Path*, NKG, v. 23, p. 129, l. 4. In the source, the second line reads, “they are limitless” rather than “they are inconceivable in number.”
1008. *Heart Essence of Secrets* (that is, the *Web of Magical Display*), chap. 3, lines 20–22, (Toh. 832), Dg. K., rNying rgyud, vol. Kha, p. 225, l. 2. In the source, the order of the lines is slightly different:

... endowed with the ever-present aspects of enlightened form that are
inconceivable,
the ever-present aspects of enlightened mind that are inconceivable,

the ever-present aspects of enlightened presence that are inconceivable, and the ever-present aspects of enlightened speech that are inconceivable, . . .

1009. That is, the extensive version of the *Heart Essence of Secrets*, reputedly in sixteen thousand verses.
1010. *Heart Essence of Secrets*, chap. 14, v. 5, (Toh. 832), Dg. K., rNying rgyud, vol. Kha, p. 248, l. 6.
1011. These are a model of buddhahood found especially in treatises of the Nyingma school of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.
1012. Ibid., chap. 9., v. 8c and v. 39c, (Toh. 832), Dg. K., rNying rgyud, vol. Kha, p. 238, l. 5 and p. 241, l. 2.
1013. Ibid., v. 39d, (Toh. 832), Dg. K., rNying rgyud, vol. Kha, p. 241, l. 2.
1014. Ibid., chap. 6, v. 9a, (Toh. 832), Dg. K., rNying rgyud, vol. Kha, p. 231, l. 6.
1015. Ibid., v. 3b–d, (Toh. 832), Dg. K., rNying rgyud, vol. Kha, p. 231, lines 2–3. The tantra in the Dergé edition reads “garuḍas” instead of “peacocks.” The term translated here as “bird-men” is, in all versions, *mkha’lding* in Tibetan, which is often the equivalent of the Sanskrit *garuḍa*. But the line in the source tantra also has *khyung* (another equivalent Tibetan term for *garuḍa*), making it repetitious if *mkha’lding* is interpreted also to mean *garuḍa*. In *Kindly Bent to Ease Us*, Part 1, 164, 228, 288 n. 19, and 300 n. 8, Longchenpa refers to lions, elephants, horses, peacocks, and *shang-shang* (a Tibetan term for a fabulous animal that is half-man, half-bird).
1016. *Heart Essence of Secrets*, that is, *Web of Magical Display*, v. 2d, (Toh. 834), Dg. K., rNying rgyud, vol. Kha, p. 231, l. 2.
1017. Source not identified.
1018. *Heart Essence of Secrets*, chap. 14, v. 3ab, (Toh. 832), Dg. K., rNying rgyud, vol. Kha, p. 248, l. 5.
1019. This refers to the buddha nature in the context of the “ground” situation, that is, the existing circumstances from which any given ordinary being embarks on the spiritual path.
1020. That is, the buddha nature in the context of one actually following the spiritual path.
1021. That is, timeless awareness as the basic space of phenomena.
1022. Source not identified.
1023. Source not identified.
1024. *Three Stages*, lines 136–37, P 4742, bsTan ’gyur dpe bsdur ma, vol. 43, p. 1176.
1025. *Heart Essence of Secrets*, chap. 3, lines 87–88, (Toh. 832), Dg. K., rNying rgyud, vol. Kha, p. 226, lines 6–7.
1026. sGro phug pa. Either the sGro phug pa (eleventh–twelfth centuries) who was the son of Zur chung pa, or Zur sGro phug pa Shakya Seng ge (1074–1134). The Zur clan produced a number of masters who were key figures in the early development of the bKa’ ma tradition and the Mahāyoga teachings of the rNying ma school.
1027. *Three Stages*, lines 141–42, P 4742, bsTan ’gyur dpe bsdur ma, vol. 43., p. 1176.
1028. Candrakīrti, *Entrance into the Middle Way*, chap. 12, v. 8, (Toh. 3861), Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. ’A, p. 432, lines 3–4.
1029. See note 1009.
1030. The Nyingma master gYung ston rDo rje dpal ba (1284–1365) was a student of the third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorjé (Rang byung rod rje, 1284–1339) and a teacher

- of the fourth Karmapa, Rolpai Dorjé (Rol pa'i rdo rje, 1340–1383). He authored a commentary on the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* entitled the *Mirror Illuminating the Meaning of the Tantra the "Heart Essence of Secrets."* NKG, vol. 28 (Sa), pp. 5–589.
1031. These are ways in which nirmāṇakāyas are able to guide beings—through the supreme merit embodied in their forms, through their direct experience of enlightened mind, through their inconceivable miraculous powers, and through the awareness they instill in beings with their enlightened speech. See Dudjom Rinpoche, *Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, Volume 2, 133.
1032. These distinctions apply to the tantric interpretation of the three kāyas.
1033. Source not identified.
1034. The source tantra reads “a specific scope of timeless awareness, a specific way it unfolds.”
1035. The source tantra reads “a specific way in which understanding awakens.”
1036. The source tantra reads “a specific way in which awareness examines reality.”
1037. The source tantra adds “of acumen.”
1038. The changed order of these two degrees (excellent and sublime) is also found in the source tantra.
1039. The source tantra reads “the ultimate consummation of the lower.” *Naturally Arising Awareness*, chap. 64, NGB, vol. 11, p. 559, l. 5 through p. 560, l. 4.
1040. According to the teachings concerning intermediate states, the “intermediate state of the true nature of reality” occurs immediately following the moment of physical death. The dissolution process resulting in death leads to a point at which the true nature of mind and all reality is revealed, but although all beings reach this point, it is only those with sufficient spiritual insight who will be able to appreciate the significance of this experience and realize this true nature. For the vast majority of beings, a subsequent phase of the intermediate state after death ensues—that of the “intermediate state of becoming,” or the process leading to physical rebirth.
1041. The pure realm associated with the eastern direction and the buddha Akṣobhya.
1042. Ibid., chap. 22, NGB, vol. 11, p. 394, l. 7.
1043. That is, in the intermediate state of becoming. In this context, the term “day” does not refer to a period of twenty-four hours but is a much more flexible term denoting the length of time that the individual being concerned could rest in an undistracted state of meditative stability in the immediately preceding lifetime.
1044. Ibid., chap. 64, NGB, vol. 11, p. 567, lines 3–4.
1045. The first level, the lowest level of the lesser kind of acumen, was covered in the foregoing discussion of those of lesser acumen.
1046. In the final stages of the dying process, the bond between mind and body dissolves through a process that proceeds from more obvious levels of perception and consciousness to more subtle ones; in this discussion, the dissolution process continues after the moment of death and into the intermediate state of the true nature of reality, with the advanced practitioner experiencing more and more subtle levels of awareness as described here.
1047. That is, the four manifest aspects of timeless awareness—discerning timeless awareness, mirrorlike timeless awareness, timeless awareness as equalness, and timeless awareness as ensured fulfillment—discounting the aspect of timeless awareness as the basic space of phenomena (the context within which the other four aspects manifest).

1048. While Kongtrul cites this passage as reading “and so one is connected with the true nature of reality” (Tib. *chos nyid du 'brel ba'o*), the source tantra reads “and so there is a connection between the mother and child aspects of the true nature of reality” (Tib. *chos nyid ma bu 'brel ba'o*). The “mother” aspect is the true nature of reality just as it is; the “child” aspect is one’s personal experience of that nature, cultivated through spiritual practice. During the intermediate state after death, the process whereby one’s personal experience of that true nature merges with the nature itself is termed the “reunion of mother and child.”
1049. *Conjunction of Sun and Moon*, chap. 4, NGB, vol. 12, p. 551, l. 6 through p. 552, l. 4.
1050. *Ibid.*, chap. 4, NGB, vol. 12, p. 552, l. 6 through p. 553, l. 2.
1051. *Ibid.*, chap. 4, NGB, vol. 12, p. 552, l. 4.
1052. *Ibid.*, chap. 4, NGB, vol. 12, p. 553, lines 2–4.
1053. *Ibid.*, chap. 4, NGB, vol. 12, p. 553, l. 4. The source tantra reads: “and so no negative thoughts whatsoever occur.”
1054. That is, one’s recognition is without any hesitation.
1055. A golden probe is used in Tibetan medicine to penetrate the pericardial sac of the heart to drain off excess fluid; hence, it is a metaphor for a situation requiring unerring precision and control.
1056. The metaphor derives from the fact that when a light source is removed, the light rays it caused to shine from a crystal seem to resolve back into the crystal.
1057. A reference to the subjective impression one gets, when watching the sun set, that the rays are being drawn back into the sun as it disappears over the horizon.
1058. A traditional metaphor for a holistic, “self-contained” state.
1059. *Naturally Arising Awareness*, chap. 32, NGB, vol. 11, p. 440, l. 4 through p. 441, l. 2.
1060. A term used in the Dzogchen teachings for the approach that focuses on the principle of “original purity” and meditation on the nature of mind. The trekchö teachings are considered to be the equivalent of the more essential teachings of the mahāmudrā approach. Trekchö practice, said to be the effortless approach for “lazy” individuals, entails one’s allowing the mind to relax into its genuine and natural state, without any contrivance, and simply maintaining that state of utter relaxation.
1061. A term used in the Dzogchen teachings for the approach that focuses on the principle of “spontaneous presence.” The practice of tögal is said to be the effortful approach for those with great diligence and involves physical postures and gazing techniques that allow visions of utter lucidity to arise as natural expressions of timeless awareness, culminating in the resolution of all phenomena into their ultimate nature.
1062. A possible (though extremely rare) result of the practice of the tögal approach, the process of supreme transference transforms one’s physical body into a replica made entirely of rainbow-colored light (the “rainbow body”), which can continue to manifest to highly advanced spiritual practitioners “until saṃsāra is emptied.”
1063. This idiom has two connotations. There is benefit for oneself and benefit for others, and there is short-term, temporary benefit and long-term, ultimate benefit.
1064. *Perfect Dynamic Energy of the Lion*, chap. 12, NGB, vol. 12, p. 696, lines 1–2.
1065. *Heaped Jewels*, chap. 4, NGB, vol. 11, p. 778, l. 4 through p. 779, l. 3.
1066. *Reverberation of Sound*, chap. 6, NGB, vol. 12, p. 166, l. 6 through p. 168, l. 1. The

Reverberation of Sound is considered to be the source text from which the rest of the seventeen Dzogchen tantras derive.

1067. Kongtrul's treatment of the distinct expressions of the three kāyas is a very similar (often verbatim) discussion to that of Longchenpa in his work *Chos dbyings rin po che'i mdzod kyi 'grel pa Lung gi gter mdzod*. See Longchen Rabjam, *Treasure Trove of Scriptural Transmission*, 407 and following.
1068. An increasingly accepted back-formation into Sanskrit of the Tibetan term *Gangs chen mtsho*, which literally means "Great Glacial Ocean."
1069. That is, the pure realms are distinct in a certain sense that does not contradict the fact that their nature is identical.
1070. Neither version of the *Treasury of Knowledge* consulted contains any reference to the teaching in this context.
1071. That is, womb birth, birth through an egg, miraculous birth (as experienced by gods or hell beings), and birth through the interaction of warmth and moisture with the consciousness taking rebirth (a form of spontaneous generation).
1072. According to Longchenpa's *Precious Treasury of the Sublime Spiritual Approach*, chap. 1, ff. 8b–9a:

Of the thirty-six deeds that constitute the continuum of the inexhaustible adornment of being, four are outer aspects of enlightened form (unchanging, not coming, not going, and not remaining); four are inner aspects (not manifesting, not acting, not proliferating, and not resolving); and four are secret aspects (vividly present, steadfast, resplendent, and unobstructed).

Four are outer aspects of enlightened speech (ineffable, invisible, non-objectifiable, and not insignificant); four are inner aspects (natural occurrence, unaffectedness, not involving subject-oriented perception, and not manifold); and four are secret aspects (fresh, genuine, authentic, and uncontrived).

Four are outer aspects of enlightened mind (immaculate meditative absorption, meditative absorption of a majestic lion, meditative absorption that brings courage, and meditative absorption like the pinnacle point of a wish-fulfilling gem); four are inner aspects (meditative absorption of the manifest display of the peak of a victory banner, meditative absorption like bolts of lightning, meditative absorption like a mighty wheel, and meditative absorption blazing with light); and four are secret aspects (meditative absorption as a seal that overwhelms, meditative absorption as a great equalizing blaze, meditative absorption as manifold aspects of the actual nature of phenomena, and meditative absorption called "the total array that is the display of natural manifestation").

These are not deeds in the sense of purposeful actions being carried out, but are called "deeds" due to the fact that they arise as aspects of the essence and dynamic energy of the qualities of enlightenment.

1073. That is, the third and highest of the states among the gods of the first level of meditative stability in the realm of form.
1074. Skt. *Gr̥dhrakūṭa*; Tib. *Bya rgod phyung po'i ri*. A hill near Rajgir in north-central India, held to be the site on which the Buddha taught the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras.

1075. In Dzogchen contexts, the Tibetan term *thugs rje* (usually translated as “compassion”) takes on a deeper connotation as the unity of the empty essence and utterly lucid nature of mind that is not so much “compassion” as that dynamic factor that makes compassion (and indeed, all qualities of enlightenment) possible.
1076. *Naturally Arising Awareness*, chap. 17, NGB, vol. 11, p. 375, lines 2–3.
1077. *Ibid.*, p. 375, lines 4–5.
1078. *Ibid.*, p. 375, lines 5–6.
1079. While Kongtrul cites this passage as reading “ascertains” (Tib. *nges pa*), the source tantra reads “dispels” (Tib. *sel ba*).
1080. While Kongtrul cites this passage as reading “realization” (Tib. *rtogs pa*), the source tantra reads “understanding” (Tib. *go ba*).
1081. *Ibid.*, p. 375, l. 6 through p. 376, l. 1.
1082. *Ibid.*, p. 376, lines 1–2.
1083. These are eight traditional analogies drawn from our ordinary experience to illustrate the nature of all phenomena as seemingly real without actually being real. They are: a dream image, an illusionist’s trick, a hallucination, a mirage, the reflection of the moon in water, an echo, the “city of the gandharvas” (a kind of “castle in the air,” or *fata morgana*), and an optical illusion. There is also a set of twelve analogies, with the following four added to the preceding eight: a rainbow, a flash of lightning, bubble on water, and a reflection in a mirror.
1084. The text reads, in error, “in all its multiplicity.”
1085. That is, transcending any and all dualistic distinctions of saṃsāra versus nirvāṇa, of confusion versus lack of confusion, and so forth.
1086. This is the way in which sambhogakāya buddhas manifest in the perceptions of bodhisattva on the tenth level of realization, as distinct from the way in which sambhogakāya manifests as awareness’s own natural manifestations within the nonmanifest context of the pure realm of dharmakāya.
1087. A common statement concerning the Buddha’s teachings in general is that they are “good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end.” This is also a theme for discussing the contents of a work—that it is positive at the outset (the introductory material), positive in the interim (the main body of the text), and positive in the end (as here, the concluding section).
1088. These treasures are seven in number—faith, discipline, the hearing of teachings, liberality, self-respect, modesty, and sublime intelligence.
1089. Śāntideva, *Engaging in the Conduct of a Bodhisattva*, chap. 1, v. 2, (Toh. 3871), Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. La, p. 2, lines 3–4.
1090. Through hearing, contemplating, and meditating on spiritual teachings.
1091. A reference to part of the longer title of Kongtrul’s *Treasury*, that is, the *Compendium of the Methods of All Spiritual Approaches* (*Theg pa’i sgo kun las btus pa*).
1092. A reference to the short title of Kongtrul’s *Treasury*, that is, the *Encompassing of All Knowledge* (*Shes bya kun khyab*).
1093. That is, Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (1820–1892) and Zhechen Önrul Gyurmé Tutop Namgyal (b. 1787). Both were very influential in nurturing Kongtrul’s nonsectarian tendencies. In particular, when he was leaving Zhechen Monastery, having been requisitioned to move to Palpung, the seat of the Tai Situs of the Kagyü school, Kongtrul had an audience with Zhechen Önrul. As he recounts

in his autobiography, “Jamgön Lama Rinpoché . . . gave me very instructive advice, saying, ‘Always focus your mind, rely on your mindfulness and alertness, and don’t be sectarian.’” Kongtrul, *Autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrul*, 21.

1094. The “ten great pillars” were Tönmi Sambhota, and the translators Bairotsana, Kawa Peltsek, Chokro Lui Gyaltsen, Zhang Yeshe Dé, Rinchen Zangpo, Dromtön Gyalwai Jungné, Ngok Lotsawa Loden Sherap, Sakya Paṇḍita, and Gö Khukpa Lhatsé. The eight masters of lineages of spiritual accomplishment are Guru Rinpoché (Nyingmapa), Atiśa (Kadampa), Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (Sakyapa), (Marpa Lotsawa) Kagyüpa, Khyungpo Naljor (Shangpa Kagyüpa), Dolpopa Sherab Gyalsten (the Vajra Yoga system, based on the Kālacakra cycle), Padampa Sanggyé (Pacification [Zhijé] and Severance [Chö]), and Orgyenpa (Odḍiyāna Tradition of Approach and Accomplishment).
1095. The “eighth lord” Mikyö Dorjé (Mi bskyod rdo rje), the eighth Gyalwang Karmapa of the Kagyü school of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition (1507–1554).
1096. These are the five founders of the Sakya school of the Tibetan tradition—Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (Sa chen Kun dga’ snying po, 1092–1158), his elder son Sönam Tsemo (bSod nams rtse mo, 1142–1182) and younger son Jetsün Drakpa Gyaltsen (rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan, 1147–1216) (these first three are known as the “three lay masters of Sakya”), their nephew Sakya Paṇḍita Kunga Gyaltsen (Sa skya paṇ di ta Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan, 1182–1251) and his nephew Chögyal Pakpa (Chos rgyal ’phags pa bLo gros rgyal mtshan, 1235–1280) (these latter two are known as the “two ordained masters of Sakya”).
1097. Jetsün Tāranātha (rJe btsun Tā ra nā tha, 1575–1634) was a master of the Jonang tradition; Kongtrul was considered a rebirth of Tāranātha.
1098. The eighth Tai Situ of the Kagyü school, Situ Panchen Chökyi Jungné (Si tu paṇ chen Chos kyi ’byung gnas, 1700–1774) founded the monastery of Palpung (dPal spungs), where Kongtrul moved in 1833, and near which he built his retreat center of Kunzang Dechen Ösel Ling (Kun bzang bde chen ’od gsal gling), where he composed much of the *Treasury of Knowledge*.
1099. These are names that Kongtrul received from his guru Pema Nyinjé Wangpo, the ninth Tai Situ (1774–1853). He was named Karma Ngawang Yönten Gyatso Trinlé Kunchap Pal Zangpo upon receiving monastic vows from Tai Situ near the end of 1833, and Lodrö Tayé Pai Dé when he received the bodhisattva vow in 1839. For a discussion of the various names with which Kongtrul signed his works, see “Jam mgon Kong sprul and the Nonsectarian Movement” in Smith, *Among Tibetan Texts*, 258–62.
1100. Tsadra Rinchendrak is a rock face on the mountain of Devikoṭi, where Kongtrul established the retreat center where he lived for much of his later life and where many of his writings were composed. Palpung Tupten Chökorling is the full name of the monastery associated with the Tai Situ incarnations in eastern Tibet.
1101. “Glory! glory! glory! May all success and accomplishment be caused to extend everywhere!”
1102. Nurturing one’s positive qualities and protecting one against negative influences are the two functions of the Buddhist teachings.
1103. In Buddhist legend, the *udumvara* flower only appears when a bodhisattva destined to become one of the one thousand buddhas in this age is born in the world. The flower’s development, from budding to blossoming to withering away, parallels the bodhisattva’s growth, attainment of enlightenment, and final nirvāṇa.

1104. Here Kongtrul is referring not just to his close connection with these two important incarnation lineages of the Karma Kagyü school but specifically to his gurus the fourteenth Karmapa, Tekchok Dorjé and the ninth Tai Situ, Pema Nyinjé Wangpo.
1105. Kā rma ngag dbang yon tan rgya mtsho phrin las kun khyab dpal bzang po. See endnote 1091.
1106. See Smith, *Among Tibetan Texts*, 261: "Following advanced instruction of Sanskrit or poetics, the teacher grants a grammatical name. Kong sprul signs certain of his works with the name Blo gter rab dga' tshangs byung snyems pa'i lang tsho'i zla snang. I assume that he received this name from Zhe chen 'Gyur med mthu stobs rnam rgyal, although I have found no mention of this in the biographical materials as yet."
1107. Kongtrul established Tsadra Rinchen Drak as his personal hermitage when in 1842 he visited the site of the former meditation center of Palpung, founded during the eighteenth century by the eighth Tai Situ, Chökyi Jungné (the site had fallen into ruins in the intervening century). Some years later, Kongtrul's guru Jamyang Khyentsei Wangpo described Kongtrul's retreat center as "the third glorious Devikoṭi," comparing it to two other holy sites named Devikoṭi, one in India and the other on the southeastern border of Tibet and Assam. For Kongtrul's own account of the founding his hermitage, see *The Autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrul*, 51–52.
1108. According to Kongtrul's autobiography, he finished the source verses in the middle of 1862. He then turned to writing the commentary, which was begun in 1863; the final version of the manuscript, as he notes below, was finished by mid-1864.
1109. Karma Tashi Özer (Kā rma bKra shis 'od zer, 1836–1910) was a khenpo of Palpung Monastery who became one of Kongtrul's principal students; it was he who requested that Kongtrul write his autobiography.
1110. The second day of joy corresponds to the sixth day of the lunar cycle.
1111. This is simply a stylistic device to ensure auspicious circumstances by extolling the year (1864) in which Kongtrul finished the *Treasury of Knowledge*. In his autobiography (see *Autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrul*, 138), Kongtrul mentions that during the Wood Rat Year (which he inadvertently refers to as the Earth Rat Year), "with the onset of warmer weather, I resumed writing my commentary on [*The Treasury of Knowledge*]." He first mentions giving the oral transmission of this work in 1866: "I gave the oral teaching transmission for my [*Treasury of Knowledge*] to the Ngor master Ngawang Rinchen and others, going through the text quite methodically." Ibid., 144. Presumably, he was working from the handwritten manuscript, as the wood blocks do not seem to have been carved until over a decade after the work was finished: "The steward Pelek assumed responsibility for publishing my three-volume commentary to [*The Treasury of Knowledge*] during the next year, that of the Wood Pig [1875–1876]. Ibid., 176.
1112. That is, a treatment that is accepted by proponents of both the śrāvaka systems and the Mahāyāna.
1113. A translation of the entire text of Book 1 of the *Treasury of Knowledge* by the International Translation Committee of Kalu Rinpoché has been published as *Treasury of Knowledge: Book One: Myriad Worlds*.
1114. That is, the Buddha.
1115. A translation of Books 2, 3, and 4 by Ngawang Zangpo is forthcoming from Snow Lion Publications.

1116. A translation of the entire text of Book 5 by the International Translation Committee of Kalu Rinpoché has been published as *Treasury of Knowledge: Book Five: Buddhist Ethics*.
1117. A translation of Book 6, Parts 1 and 2 by Gyurme Dorje is forthcoming from Snow Lion Publications.
1118. A translation of Book 6, Part 3 by Elizabeth Callahan has been published as *The Treasury of Knowledge: Book Six, Part Three: Frameworks of Buddhist Philosophy*.
1119. A translation of Book 6, Part 4 by Elio Guarisco and Ingrid McLeod has been published as *Treasury of Knowledge: Book Six, Part Four: Systems of Buddhist Tantra*.
1120. A translation of Book 7 by Richard Barron is forthcoming from Snow Lion Publications.
1121. A translation of Book 8, Parts 1 and 2 by Richard Barron is forthcoming from Snow Lion Publications.
1122. A translation of Book 8, Part 3 by Elio Guarisco and Ingrid McLeod has been published as *Treasury of Knowledge: Book Eight, Part Three: The Elements of Tantric Practice*.
1123. A translation of Book 8, Part 4 by Sarah Harding has been published as *Treasury of Knowledge: Book Eight, Part Four: Esoteric Instructions*.
1124. Books 9 and 10 of the *Treasury of Knowledge* are translated in this present volume.
1125. That is, the heavens, the earth, and the underworld; a traditional way of including all forms of life throughout the universe.
1126. The Tibetan term *'du gsum pa* (one who has only three concerns) is the equivalent of the Sanskrit *bhusuku* which Kongtrul defines in Book 9, Part 3 as someone who lives only to eat, sleep, and defecate.

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Adornment of the Vajra Heart Essence

Śrī vajra hṛdayālaṃkāra tantra nāma

dPal rdo rje snying po rgyan gyi rgyud ces bya ba

Toh. 490 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Tha, ff. 1b–82a)

Advice to a King

Ārya rājavavādaka nāma mahāyāna sūtra

'Phags pa rgyal po la gdams pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo

Toh. 221 (Dg. K., mDo sde, vol. Dza, ff. 78a–84b)

All-Creating Monarch

Sarva dharma mahāśānti bodhicitta kulaya rāja

Chos.thams cad rdzogs pa chen po byang chub kyi sems kun byed
rgyal po

Toh. 828 (Dg. K., rÑiṅ rgyud, vol. Ka, ff. 1b–86a) and NGB, vol. 1,
pp. 2–262

All-Embracing Intent

Sarva tathāgata citta jñāna guhyārtha garbha vyūha vajra tantra sid-
dhi yogāgama samāja sarva vidyā sūtra mahāyānābhisamaya
dharma paryāya vivyūha nāma sūtra

De bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi thugs gsang ba'i ye shes don gyi
snying po rdo rje bkod pa'i rgyud rnal 'byor grub pa'i lung kun
'dus rig pa'i mdo theg pa chen po mngon par rtogs pa chos kyi
rnam grangs rnam par bkod pa zhes bya ba'i mdo

Toh. 829 (Dg. K., rÑyṅ rgyud, vol. Ka, ff. 86b–290a) and NGB,
vol. 16, pp. 1–617

Amassing of the Rare and Sublime.

Ārya mahāratna kūṭa dharma paryāya śata sāhasrika granthe tri
 saṃvara nirdeśa parivarta nāma mahāyāna sūtra
 'Phags pa dKon mchog brtsegs pa chen po'i chos kyi rnam grangs
 stong phrag brgya pa las sdom pa gsum bstan pa'u le'u zhes bya
 ba theg pa chen po'i mdo
 Toh. 45 (Dg. K., dKon brtsegs, vol. Ka, ff. 1b–45a)

Array of Inset Gems

Nor bu phra bkod rang gi don thams cad gsal bar byed pa'i rgyud
 NGB, vol. 12, pp. 712–77

Authentic Conduct of Yoginīs

Yoginī sañcarya
 rNal 'byor ma'i kun tu spyod pa
 Toh. 375 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ga, ff. 34a–44b)

Cloud of the Rare and Excellent

Ārya ratna megha nāma mahāyāna sūtra
 'Phags pa dKon mchog sprin zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo
 Toh. 231 (Dg. K., mDo sde, vol. Wa, ff. 1b–112b)

Compendium concerning the Glorious Vajra of Timeless Awareness

Vajra jñāna samuccaya nāma tantra
 Ye shes rdo rje kun las btus pa zhes bya ba'i rgyud
 Toh. 447 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, ff. 282a–286a)

Compendium of the Perfection of Sublime Intelligence

Ārya prajñāpāramitā sañcaya gāthā
 'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin sdud pa tshigs su bcad pa
 Toh. 13 (Dg. K., Śes-phyin sna tshogs, vol. Ka, ff. 1b–19b)

Complete Consolidation of Spiritual Teachings

Ārya dharma saṃgīti nāma mahāyāna sūtra
 'Phags pa chos yang dag par sdud pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i
 mdo
 Toh. 238 (Dg. K., mDo sde, vol. Zha, ff. 1b–99b)

Conjunction of Sun and Moon

Nyi ma dang zla ba kha sbyor ba chen po gsang ba'i rgyud
 NGB, vol. 12, pp. 491–559

Definitive Commentary on Enlightened Intent

Ārya saṃdhinirmocana nāma mahāyāna sūtra

'Phags pa dgongs pa nges par 'grel pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo

Toh. 106 (Dg. K., mDo sde, vol. Ca, ff. 1b–55b)

Detailed Array

rNam bkod

[source not identified]

Discourse Requested by Dhāraṇīśvararāja

see next entry

Discourse that Definitively Presents the Supreme Compassion of the Tathāgata

Ārya tathāgata mahā karuṇā nirdeśa nāma mahāyāna sūtra

'Phags pa de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying rje chen po nges par bstan pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo

Toh. 147 (Dg. K. mDo sde, vol. Pa, ff. 142a–242b)

Equal Union with All Buddhas

Śrī sarva buddha samayoga dākinī jāla saṃvara nāma uttarā tantra

dPal sangs rgyas thams cad dang mnyam par sbyor ba mkha' 'gro ma sgyu ma bde ba'i mchog ces bya ba'i rgyud phyi ma

Toh. 366 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, ff. 151b–193a)

First Section (see Vajra of Delight)

Hevajra tantra rāja nāma

Kye'i rdo rje zhjes bya ba rgyud kyi rgyal po

Toh. 417 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, ff. 1b–13b)

Fragmentary Extract from "Stirring the Pit"

Dong sprugs bkol ba dum bu'i rgyud

[source not identified]

Gathering of Secrets

Sarva tathāgata kāya vāk citta rahasya guhya samāja nāma mahākālpā rāja

De bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi sku gsung thugs kyi gsang chen gsang ba 'dus pa zhes bya ba brtag pa'i rgyal po chen po

Toh. 442 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, ff. 90a–148a)

Heaped Jewels

Rin po che spungs pa'i yon tan chen po ston pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po
chen po

NGB, vol. 11, pp. 757–88

Heart Essence of Secrets (The Ascertainment of Suchness)

Śrī guhya garbha tattva viniścaya

dPal gsang ba'i snying po de kho na nyid rnam par nges pa

Toh. 832 (Dg. K., rNyiṅ rgyud, vol. Kha, ff. 110b–132a) and NGB,
vol. 20, pp. 152–218

Holy Golden Light

Ārya suvarṇa prabhāsottama sūtrendra rāja nāma mahāyāna sūtra

'Phags pa gser 'od dam pa mdo sde'i dbang po'i rgyal po zhes bya ba
theg pa chen po'i mdo

Toh. 556 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Pa, ff. 151b–273a)

Journey to Śrī Laṅkā

Ārya laṅkāvatāra mahāyāna sūtra

'Phags pa lang kar gshegs pa'i theg pa chen po'i mdo

Toh. 107 (Dg. K., mDo sde, vol. Ca, ff. 56a–191b)

Level of Buddhahood

Ārya buddha bhūmi nāma mahāyāna sūtra

'Phags pa sangs rgyas kyi sa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo

Toh. 275 (Dg. K., mDo sde, vol. Ya, ff. 36a–44b)

Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana

Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi vikurvitādhiṣṭhāna vaipulya sūtrendra
rāja nāma dharma paryāya

rNam par snang mdzad chen po mngon par rdzogs par byang chub
pa rnam par sprul pa byin gyis rlob pa shin tu rgyas pa mdo sde'i
dbang po'i rgyal po zhes bya ba'i chos kyi rnam grangs

Toh. 494 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Tha, ff. 151b–260a)

“Mother” (can refer to any of the following:)

Transcendent Perfection of Sublime Intelligence in Eight Thousand Verses

Ārya aṣṭa sāhasrikā prajñāpāramitā

'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brgyad stong pa

Toh. 12 (Dg. K., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, ff. 1b–286a)

Transcendent Perfection of Sublime Intelligence in One Hundred Thousand Verses

Śata sāhasrikā prajñāpāramitā

Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa stong phrag brgya pa

Toh. 8 (Dg. K., Śes phyin, vols. Ka–A)

Transcendent Perfection of Sublime Intelligence in Twenty-five Thousand Verses

Pañca viṃśati sāhasrikā prajñāpāramitā

Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa stong phrag nyi shu lnga pa

Toh. 9 (Dg. K., Śes phyin, vols. Ka–Ga)

Naturally Arising Awareness

De bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi ting nge 'dzin yongs su bshad pa
ye shes 'dus pa'i mdo theg pa chen po gsang ba bla na med pa'i
rgyud chos thams cad kyi 'byung gnas sangs rgyas thams cad kyi
dgongs pa gsang sngags gcig pa'i ye shes rdzogs pa chen po'i don
gsal bar byed pa'i rgyud rig pa rang shar chen po'i rgyud / Rig pa
rang shar

NGB, vol. 11, pp. 323–699

Ocean of Dākas

Śrī dākārṇava māhayoginī tantra rāja nāma

dPal mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho rnal 'byor ma'i rgyud kyi rgyal po chen
po zhes bya ba

Toh. 372 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Kha, ff. 137a–264b)

Origin of Sublime Bliss

Śrī mahāsamvarodaya tantra rāja nāma

dPal bde mchog 'byung ba zhes bya ba'i rgyud kyi rgyal po chen po

Toh. 373 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Kha, ff. 265a–311a)

Perfect Dynamic Energy of the Lion

Seng ge rtsal rdzogs chen po'i rgyud

NGB, vol. 12, pp. 559–712

Reciting the Names of Mañjuśrī

Mañjuśrī jñāna sattvasya paramārtha nāma saṃgiti

'Jam dpal ye shes sems dpa'i don dam pa'i mtshan yang dag par
brjod pa

Toh. 360 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, ff. 1b–13b)

Request by the Four Goddesses

Catur devī paripṛcchā

Lha mo bzhis yongs su zhus pa

Toh. 446 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, ff. 277b–281b)

Request of Anavatapta

Ārya anavatapta nāga rāja paripṛcchā nāma mahāyāna sūtra

'Phags pa klu'i rgyal po ma dros pas zhus pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo

Toh. 156 (Dg. K., mDo sde, vol. Pha, ff. 206a–253b)

Request of Suvikrānta-vikrami

Ārya suvikrānta vikrami paripṛcchā prajñā pāramitā nirdeśa

'Phags pa rab kyi rtsal gyis rnam par gnong pas zhus pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa bstan pa

Toh. 14 (Dg. K., Śes phyin, vol. Ka, 20a–103b)

Request of the Girl Ratnā

Ratnā dārikā [paripṛcchā] sūtra

Bu mo rin chen gyi[s zhus pa'i] mdo

[source not identified]

Reverberation of Sound

Rin po che 'byung bar byed pa sgra thal 'gyur chen po'i rgyud

NGB, vol. 12, pp. 1–173

Secrets of the Tathāgatas

Ārya tathāgata cintya guhya nirdeśa nāma mahāyāna sūtra

'Phags pa de bzhin gshegs pa'i gsang ba bsam gyis mi khyab pa bstan pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo

Toh. 47 (Dg. K., dKon brtsegs, vol. Ka, ff. 100a–203a)

A Share of Mantra

Śrī catuḥ pīthākhyāta tantra rāja mantrāṃśa nāma

dPal gdan bzhi pa'i bshad pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po sngags kyi cha zhes bya ba

Toh. 429 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, ff. 231b–260a)

Source Tantra of the Circle of Bliss

Tantra rāja śrī laghu saṃvara nāma

rGyud kyi rgyal po dPal bde mchog nyung ngu zhes bya ba

Toh. 368 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, ff. 213b–246b)

Specific Presentation of the Web of Magical Display

sGyu'phrul bye brag bstan pa

[source not identified]

Sphere of the Secret Moon

Śrī candra guhya tilaka nāma mahātantra rāja

dPal zla gsang thig le zhes bya ba rgyud kyi rgyal po chen po

Toh. 477 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ja, ff. 247b–303a)

Sphere of the Supreme Seal

Śrī mahāmudrā tilaka nāma mādhyoginī tantra rājādhipati

dPal phyag rgya chen po'i thig le zhes bya ba rnal 'byor ma chen mo'i

rgyud kyi rgyal po'i mnga' bdag

Toh. 420 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, ff. 66a–90b)

Sublimely Unchanging State

mChog mi 'gyur

see Puṇḍarīka, *Stainless Light**Subsequent Tantra*

Uttara tantra

rGyud phyi ma

Toh. 443 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, ff. 148a–157b)

Ten Spiritual Levels (Chapter 26 of *Garland of Buddhas*)

Daśa bhūmika sūtra

Sa bcu pa'i mdo

Garland of Buddhas

Buddhāvataṃsaka nāma mahāvāipulya sūtra

Sangs rgyas phal po che zhes bya ba shin tu rgyas pa chen po'i mdo

Toh. 44 (Dg. K., Phal chen, vols. Ka–A)

Two Sections

(A) Hevajra tantra rāja nāma

Kye'i rdo rje zhes bya ba rgyud kyi rgyal po

Toh. 417 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, ff. 1b–13b)

(B) Hevajra ḍākinī jvāla sambara tantra rāja nāma

Kye'i rdo rje mkha' 'gro ma drva ba'i sdom pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po

Toh. 418 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, ff. 13b–30a)

United Intent

dGongs 'dus

[source not identified]

Unsurpassable Definitive Expression

Abhidhāna uttara tantra nāma

mNgon par brjod pa'i rgyud bla ma zhes bya ba

Toh. 369 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, ff. 247a–370a)

Vajra Ḍāka

Śrī vajra ḍāka nāma mahātantra rāja

rGyud kyi rgyal po chen po dpal rdo rje mkha' 'gro zhes bya ba

Toh. 370 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Kha, ff. 1b–125a)

*Vajra Garland*Śrī vajra māla abhidhāna mahāyoga tantra sarva tantra hrdaya
rahasya vibhaṅgarNal 'byor chen po'i rgyud dpal rdo rje phreng ba mngon par brjod
pa rgyud thams cad kyi snying po gsang ba rnam par phyed ba
zhes bya ba

Toh. 445 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, ff. 167b–238b)

Vajra of Delight (see also *First Section, Two Sections*)

Hevajra tantra rāja nāma

Kye'i rdo rje zhes bya ba rgyud kyi rgyal po

Toh. 417 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, ff. 1b–13b)

Vajra Pavilion

Ārya ḍākinī vajra pañjara mahātantra rāja kalpa nāma

'Phags pa mka' 'gro ma rdo rje gur zhes bya ba'i rgyud kyi rgyal po
chen po'i brtag pa

Toh. 419 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, ff. 30a–65b)

Vajra Pinnacle

Vajra śekhara mahāguhya yoga tantra

gSang ba rnal 'byor chen po'i rgyud rdo rje rtse mo

Toh. 480 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ņa, ff. 142b–274a)

Web of Magical Display

dPal gsang ba'i snying po de kho na nyid nges pa

Toh. 832 (Dg. K., rÑiṅ rgyud, vol. Kha, ff. 110b–132a) and Toh. 834 (Dg. K., rÑiṅ rgyud, vol. Kha, ff. 198b–298b) and NGB, vol. 21, pp. 2–326

Well-Sealed Locket

Samputa nāma mahātantra
Yang dag par sbyor ba zhes bya ba'i rgyud chen po
Toh. 381 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ga, ff. 73b–158b)

Wheel of Time

Paramādibuddhoddhṛta śrī kālacakra nāma tantra rāja
mChog gi dang po'i sangs rgyas las phyung ba rgyud kyi rgyal po
dpal dus kyi 'khor lo zhes bya ba
Toh. 361 (Dg. K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, ff. 22b–128b)

TREATISES

Abhayākaraḡupta

Adornment of the Sage's Intent

Muni matālamkāra
Thub pa'i dgongs pa'i rgyan
Toh. 3903 (Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. A, ff. 73b–293a)

Fronḡ of Pith Instructions

Śrī samputa tantra rāja tīkāmnāya mañjarī nāma
dPal yang dag par sbyor ba'i rgyud kyi rgyal po'i rgya cher 'grel pa
man ngag gi snye ma zhes bya ba
Toh. 1198 (Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Cha, ff. 1b–316a)

Anonymous

Three Stages: Pith Instructions concerning the Web of Magical Display

Māyājāloḡadeśa krama traya
sGyu 'phrul dra ba'i man ngag rim pa gsum pa
P 4742 (Peking bsTan 'gyur, rGyud 'grel, vol. Bu, ff. 567a–569a)

Anonymous ("Learned Ones")

Two-Volume Glossary

Nighaṅṡu
sGra sbyor bam po gnyis pa
Toh. 4347 (Dg. T., sNa tshogs, vol. Co, ff. 131b–160a)

Āryadeva

Four Hundred Verses

Catuḥśataka śāstra kārikā nāma

bsTan bcos bzhi brgya pa zhes bya ba'i tshig le'ur byas pa

Toh. 3849 (Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. Tsha, ff. 1b-18a)

Lamp That Integrates Conduct

Caryā melāpaka pradīpa

sPyod pa bsdus pa'i sgron ma

Toh. 1803 (Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Ngi, ff. 57a-106b)

Asaṅga

Compendium of Abhidharma

Abhidharma samuccaya

Chos mgnon pa kun las btus pa

Toh. 4049 (Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Ri, ff. 44b-120a)

Summary of the Mahāyāna Approach

Mahāyāna saṃgraha

Theg pa chen po bsdus pa

Toh. 4048 (Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Ri, ff. 1b-43a)

Buddhaguhya

Graduated Path

sLob dpon sangs rgyas gsang bas mdzad pa'i lam rim chen mo

NKG, vol. 23 ('A), pp. 5-133

Short Exposition of the Path (of the Web of Magical Display)

sGyu 'phrul drva ba'i lam rnam par bshad pa chung ngu

NKG, vol. 23 ('A), pp. 133-57

Buddhaśrījñāna

Oral Transmission of Mañjuśrī: (Meditation on Suchness according to the Two Stages)

Dvikrama tattva bhāvana nāma mukhāgama

Rim pa gnyis pa'i de kho na nyid bsgom pa zhes bya ba zhal
gyi lung

Toh. 1853 (Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Di, ff. 1b-17b)

Candrakīrti

Entrance into the Middle Way

Madhyamakāvatāra nāma

dBu ma la 'jug pa zhes bya ba

Toh. 3861 (Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. 'A, ff. 201b–219a)

Illuminating Lamp

Pradīpodyotana nāma ṭīkā

sGron ma gsal bar byed pa zhes bya ba'i rgya cher bshad pa

Toh. 1785 (Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Ha, ff. 1b–201b)

Daśabalaśrimitra

Ascertaining the Conditioned and Unconditioned

Saṃskṛtāsaṃskṛta viniścaya nāma

'Dus byas dang 'dus ma byas rnam par nges pa zhes bya ba

Toh. 3897 (Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. Ha, ff. 109a–317a)

Dharmakīrti

Detailed Commentary on Valid Cognition

Pramāṇa vārttika kārikā

Tshad ma rnam 'grel gyi tshig le'ure byas pa

Toh. 4210 (Dg. T., Tshad ma, vol. Ce, ff. 94b–151a)

Ḍombi Heruka

Advice to Yogis and Yoginīs on Extraordinary Topics

Yogayoginya sādharmaṇopadeśa nāma

rNal 'byor pha dang rnal 'byor ma rnam la thun mong ma yin pa'i
don la gdams pa zhes bya ba

Toh. 1230 (Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Nya, ff. 41a–43a)

Haribhadra

*Major Commentary on the Transcendent Perfection of Sublime Intelligence in Eight Thousand Verses*Ārya aṣṭa sāhasrikā prajñā pāramitā vyākhyābhisamayālaṃkāra loka
nāma'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brgyad stong pa'i bshad pa
mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyan gyi snang ba

Toh. 3791 (Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Cha, ff. 1b–341a)

Shorter Commentary on the "Ornament of Manifest Realization"

Abhisamayālaṃkāra nāma prajñā pāramitopadeśa śāstra vptti/
Sphuṭārtha

Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag gi bstand bcos mngon
par rtogs pa'i rgyan zhes bya ba'i 'grel pa / 'Grel pa don gsal
Toh. 3793 (Dg. T., Śes phyin, vol. Ja, ff. 78b–140a)

Indrabhūti

Presence of Timeless Awareness

Jñāna siddhi nāma sādhanā

Ye shes grub pa zhes bya ba'i sgrub pa'i thabs
Toh. 2219 (Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Wi, ff. 36b–60b)

Jinaputra

Detailed Explanation of the "Compendium of Abhidharma"

Abhidharma samuccaya vyākhyā nāma

mNgon pa chos kun las btus pa'i rnam par bshad pa zhes bya ba
Toh. 4054 (Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Li, ff. 117a–293a)

Explanation of the "Compendium of Abhidharma"

Abhidharma samuccaya bhāṣya

Chos mngon pa kun las btus pa'i bshad pa
Toh. 4053 (Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Li, ff. 1b–117a)

Jñānagarbha

Two Levels of Truth

Satya dvaya vibhaṅga vptti

bDen pa gnyis rnam par 'byed pa'i tshig le'ur byas pa
Toh. 3881 (Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. Sa, ff. 1b–3b)

Maitreya

Distinguishing Center and Limit

Madhyānta vibhaṅga kārikā

dBu dang mtha rnam par 'byed pa'i tshig le'ur byas pa
Toh. 4021 (Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, ff. 40b–45a)

Highest Continuum

Mahāyānottara tantra śāstra

Theg pa chen po rgyud bla ma'i bstan bcos
Toh. 4024 (Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, ff. 54b–73a)

Ornament of Manifest Realization

Abhisamayālaṃkāra nāma prajñā pāramitopadeśa śāstra kārikā
 Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par
 rtogs pa'i rgyan zhes bya ba'i tshig le'ur byas pa
 Toh. 3786 (Dg. T. Śes phyin, vol. Ka, ff. 1b–13a)

Ornament of the Sūtras

Mahāyāna sūtrālaṃkāra nāma kārikā
 Theg pa chen po mdo sde'i rgyan zhes bya ba'i tshigs le'ur byas pa
 Toh. 4020 (Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, ff. 1b–39a)

Mañjughoṣa Narendrakīrti

Brief Presentation of the Tenets of View

Pradarśanānumatoddeśa parīkṣa nāma
 Rang gi lta ba'i 'dod pa mdor bstan pa yongs su brtag pa zhes
 bya ba / lta 'dod mdor bstan
 P 4610 (Peking bsTan 'gyur, rGyud 'grel, vol. Pu, ff. 21a–50b)

Nāgārjuna

Five Stages

Pañcakrama
 Rim pa lnga pa
 Toh. 1802 (Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Ngi, ff. 45a–57a)

Precious Garland

Rāja parīkathā ratna mālā
 rGyal po la gtam bya ba rin po che'i phreng ba
 Toh. 4158 (Dg. T., sPriñ yig, vol. Ge, ff. 107a–126a)

Seventy Verses on Emptiness

Śūnyatā saptati kārikā nāma
 sTong pa nyid bdun cu pa'i tshig le'ur byas pa zhes bya ba
 Toh. 3827 (Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. Tsa, ff. 24a–27a)

Sixty Verses of Reasoning

Yukti ṣaṣṭikā kārikā nāma
 Rigs pa drug cu pa'i tshig le'ur byas pa zhes bya ba
 Toh. 3825 (Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. Tsa, ff. 20b–22b)

Source Verses on Sublime Intelligence

Prajñā nāma mūla madhyamaka kārikā

dBu ma rtsa ba'i tshig le'ur byas pa shes rab ces bya ba
Toh. 3824 (Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. Tsa, ff. 1b–19a)

Padmākara

Five Samaya Commitments

Samaya pañca

Dam tshig lnga pa

Toh. 1224 (Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Nya, ff. 26b–28b)

Padmavajra

Accomplishment of Secrets

Sakala tantra sambhava sañcodanī śrī guhyasiddhi nāma

rGyud ma lus pa'i don nges par skul bar byed pa

Toh. 2217 (Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Wi, ff. 1b–28b)

Pinnacle of Definitive Expression

Nges brjod rtse mo

[source not identified]

Puṇḍarīka

Stainless Light

Vimala prabhā nāma mūla tantrānusāriṇī dvādaśa sāhasrikā laghu
kālacakra tantra rāja ṭīkā

bsDus pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po dus kyi 'khor lo'i 'grel bshad rtsa ba'i
rgyud kyi rjes su 'jug pa stong phrag bcu gnyis pa dri ma med pa'i
'od ces bya ba

Toh. 845 (Dg. K., Dus 'khor 'grel bshad, vol. Śrī, ff. 1b–469a)

Toh. 1347 (Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Tha, ff. 107b–277a and vol. Da, ff.
1b–297a)

Śāntideva

Engaging in the Conduct of a Bodhisattva

Bodhisattva caryāvatāra

Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa

Toh. 3871 (Dg. T., dBu ma, vol. La, ff. 1b–40a)

Śrīghoṣa

Answers to Vajrasattva's Questions

Vajrasattva praśnottara

rDo rje sems dpa'i zhus lan

(sNar thang bsTan 'gyur, rGyud 'grel, vol. Ru, ff. 121a–127a)

Vagīśvarakīrti

Seven Branches

Saptāṅga

Yan lag bdun pa

Toh. 1888 (Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Pi, ff. 190a–203a)

Vajragarbha

Commentary by Vajragarbha

Hevajra piṇḍārtha ṭīkā

Kye'i rdo rje bsdus pa'i don gyi rgya cher 'grel pa

Toh. 1180 (Dg. T., rGyud, vol. Ka, ff. 1b–126a)

Vasubandhu

Treasury of Abhidharma

Abhidharma kośa kārikā

Chos mngon pa'i mdzod kyi tshig le'ur byas pa

Toh. 4089 (Dg. T., mNgon pa, vol. Ku, ff. 1b–25a)

Vimalamitra

Scriptural Synopsis

Khog gzung gsal sgron

NKSG, vol. 80, pp. 725–52

White Lily

Padma dkar po

[source not identified]

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Akya Yongdzin Yangchen Gawai Lodrö (A skya yongs 'dzin dbyangs can
dga ba'i blo gros)

*dPal gsang ba 'dus pa 'phags lugs dang mthun pa'i sngags kyi sa lam
rnam bzhag legs bshad skal bzang 'jug ngogs*

Āryaśūra

A Garland of Successive Lives

Jātaka mālā

Skyes pa'i rabs kyi rgyud

Toh. 4150 (Dg. T., sKyes rabs, vol. Hu, ff. 1b1–135a7)

Butön Rinchen Drup (Bu ston rin chen grub)

dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i bsdus don dri med 'od kyi rgyan

Dapok Gomchen Ngawang Drakpa (Dvags po sgom chen ngag dbang
grags pa)

Dvags po mkhan chen ngag dbang grags pa'i sa lam stegs bu

Gampopa Sönam Rinchen (sGam po pa bsod nams rin chen)

*Dvags po'i thar rgyan / Dam chos yid bzhin gyi nor bu thar pa rin po
che'i rgyan*

Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé ('Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas)
Shes bya mdzod composed of:

*Theg pa'i sgo kun las btus pa gsung rab rin po che'i mdzod bslab pa
gsum legs par ston pa'i bstan bcos Shes bya kun khyab*

(source verses)

*Shes bya kun la khyab pa'i gzhung lugs nyung ngu'i tshig gis rnam par
'grol ba legs bshad yongs 'du Shes bya mtha' yas pa'i rgya mtsho*
(commentary)

1 vol. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2002

4 vols. Delhi: Shechen Publications, 1997

Jamyang Lozang Shenyen ('Jam dbyangs blo bzang bshes gnyen)

Sa lam gyi rnam bzhag skal bzang mig 'byed

Khedrup Jé Gelek Palzang (mKhas grub rje dge legs dpal bzang)

*rJe'i zhal gyi gdams pa 'ga' zhig gsal sgron dang khrid gnyis dang sbyar
te bshad pa*

Sa lam gyi rnam bzhag mkhas pa'i yid 'phrog

Könchok Jigmé Wangpo (dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po)

Sa lam gyi rnam bzhag theg gsum mdzes rgyan

Longchen Rabjam (kLong chen rab 'byams)

*Grub pa'i mtha' rin po che'i mdzod / Theg pa mtha' dag gi don gsal bar
byed pa grub pa'i mtha' rin po che'i mdzod*

Published by Do Drupchen Rinpoche, Deorali, Sikkim, n.d.

Theg pa'i mchog rin po che'i mdzod

Published by Do Drupchen Rinpoche, Deorali, Sikkim, n.d.

*Tshig don rin po che'i mdzod / gSang ba bla na med pa 'od gsal rdo rje
snying po'i gnas gsum gsal bar bye dpa tshig don rin po che'i mdzod*

Published by Do Drupchen Rinpoche, Deorali, Sikkim, n.d.

Lozang Dampa Gyatso (bLo bzang dam pa rgya mtsho)

*gSang sngags rdo rje theg pa'i sa lam gyi rnam bzhag dang gzhan yang
nye kho ci rigs pa dngos grub rgya mtshor 'jug pa'i gru gzingz gzhan
don 'byed pa'i lde mig*

*Phar phyin gyi gzhung la thos bsam byed pa'i tshe nye bar mkho ba'i sa
lam gyi rnam bzhag nyung ngu sogs ming don 'ga' zhig dang zhugs
gnas dang bsam gzugs so so'i don yang che long tsam bshad pa blo
gsar bgrod pa'i them skas*

Lozang Palden Tendzin Nyendrak (bLo bang dpal ldan bstan 'dzin
snyan grags)

*Theg pa gsum gyi sa dang lam gyi rnam par bzhag pa thub bstan
mdzes pa'i rgyan*

*rGyud sde bzhi'i rnam bzhag dang sa lam gyi brgod tshul ji lta ba
bzhin 'chad pa rgyud sde nor bu'i bang mdzod*

- Lozang Tsultrim Gyatso (bLo bzang tshul khriṃs rgya mtsho)
gSang sngags rdo rje theg pa'i sa dang lam gyi rnam par bzhag pa zung
'jug khang bzang du bgrod pa'i rin chen them skas
- Mipham Gyamtso, Ju ('Ju mi pham rgya mtsho)
mKhas pa la 'jug pa'i sgo
 Xining, China: mTsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1988
- Paltrul Orgyen Jigmé Chökyi Wangpo (dPal sprul o rgyan 'jigs med
 chos kyi dbang po)
Lam lnga rim gis bgrod tshul dang sa bcu'i yon tan thob tshul bye brag
tu bshad pa
- Tāranātha
Las dang po pa rnams la phan pa'i rab tu byed pa bstan pa'i nor rdzas
- Tsongkapa Lozang Drakpa ('Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa)
dGe 'dun nyi shu bsduṣ pa rjes gnang ba dang zhugs gnas
rGyud kyi rgyal po dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i man ngag rim pa lnga rab tu
gsal ba'i sgron me
Zhugs dang gnas pa'i skyes bu chen po rnams kyi rnam par bzhag pa
blo gsal bgrod pa'i them skas
- Tuken Yongdzin Tenpa Gyatso ('Thu'u bkvan yongs 'dzin bstan pa rgya
 mtsho)
Byang chub sems dpa'i sa lam bgrod tshul gSang sngags kyi sa lam
bgrod tshul legs par bshad pa ngag gi snang ba
- Vasubandhu
Explanation of the "Ornament of the Sūtras"
Sūtrālaṃkāra vyākhyā
 mDo sde rgyan gyi bshad pa
 Toh. 4026 (Dg. T., Sems tsam, vol. Phi, ff. 129b–260a)
- Yaktön Sang-gyé Pal (gYag ston Sangs rgyas dPal)
Wish-Fulfilling Jewel: The King of Power
 mNgon rtogs rgyan dang 'grel pa don gsal rtsa 'grel gyi dgos don
 stsol ba rin chen bsam 'phel dbang gi rgyal po
- Yungtön Dorjé Palwa (gYung ston rDo rje dPal ba)
Mirror Illuminating the Meaning of the Tantra the "Heart Essence
of Secrets"

dPal gsang ba snying po'i rgyud don gsal byed me long
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